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# **Reason and Revelation in Sikhism**



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# LAND MARKS IN INDIAN ANTHROPOLOGY

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## Reason and Revelation in Sikhism

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BY

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## PREFACE

Revelation is central element in most of the religious traditions of the world. It is often cited as an authority on which the descriptive and normative structure of the traditions is raised. We have also come across the claims of the ecstasy inspired by the experience of the divine. In Sikhism revelation is not only the starting point of the religious belief but permeates throughout the main frame of its expression and exposition. The founders of the Sikh faith have often reminded us that revelation is the source of their inspiration. They have similarly proclaimed it to be the authority for their normative teachings. Revelation has come to them both as the fulfilment as well as the direction in which the Sikh is to be guided for the self realization. Revelation in Sikhism, thus, stands as a link between the experience of Reality as well as the consciousness of the *ideal* towards which human life is to be directed. Thus revelation is not one time intervention but is a continuous participation of the individual and society in the knowledge of the higher and the living of the life in the light of this knowledge. Sikhism, in this manner, shows revelation to be a continuous possibility for human life and endeavour. The central role of the Sikh Scripture, namely *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* should also be kept in view. Every Sikh has been taught by the Gurus to interact and interface with this scripture as an experience of the Spiritual in their daily life. The scripture is therefore to be taken as a continuous source of the spiritual experience. The Real is thus brought closer to human life in its everyday activity. It appears that the Sikh Gurus have, by presenting this view of revelation, brought it very close to the life of the individual and the society. The remote is thus rendered as near or shall we say, very near to the individual and the society. One can breathe the revelation and experience it in all aspects of human life.

It appears that the Sikh Gurus have not regarded revelation merely as an institution of formal intervention of the Spiritual in the material world. The religious institutions derived their sustenance from it but are not reduced to it. The sanctity of the religious institutions is derived from the vibrant vitality of the revelation and not the other way around. Thus revelation appears at the very basis of the meaningfulness of human experience and the guiding force in the direction of its individual and social activity. In this way the Gurus have presented revelation as a participatory feature of the everyday life.



## *Reason and Revelation in Sikhism*

The distinguishing characteristic of the human being is its rationality. A departure from its earlier and other bio-milieu in the universe is indicated in the role of reason in the human-kind. The reason is thus an essential and integral feature of human life. The Sikh Gurus' notion of reason has brought it in close relationship with revelation. They have regarded reason to be set up in the direction of the spiritual. They have not regarded reason to be limited to one aspect of the individual life only. They have held that the reason may help the individuals to apprehend the greater coherence and may move them to seek the truth of revelation which encompasses the absolute coherence. Reason and revelation are therefore mutually complementary on the path through the world and towards the Supreme. In a significant sense both are the integrated essays in spiritual participation.

Dr. Gurnam Kaur has worked very hard to discover and present the above unique feature of the Sikh view regarding reason and revelation. She has perceived the ever ascending levels of coherence in the Sikh understanding of reason and revelation. Her work is original, but also very systematic, and well structured. She has, on the one hand highlighted the identity of the teachings of the Sikh Gurus on the subject, underlined the departures, and analysed the elements of the new vision. On the other hand, she has not lost sight of the spiritual heritage of the humankind to which it appears to be related in terms of the vocabulary and the concepts but the unique identity is also witnessed to be emerging in a very gentle and convincing manner. This work is a result of Dr. Gurnam Kaur's doctoral thesis. The depth and seriousness of the work is obvious. but she treats the subject freshly and very smoothly. Many readers will benefit from her sincere and comprehensive research in producing this piece of much needed work. Her research is a great contribution in unfolding the epistemological dimension of the philosophy of religion. It is a very welcome addition to the knowledge on this subject. I have derived tremendous satisfaction from watching her progress towards this impressive achievement.

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# CONTENTS

<i>Pre face</i>	v
1. Introduction	... 1
2. Nature of Reason and Revelation in earlier traditions	... 31
3. Nature of Reason in Sikhism	... 81
4. Kinds of knowledge and Role of Reason in Sikhism	... 117
5. Nature of Revelation in Sikhism	... 167
6. Unity of Reason and Revelation in Sikhism	... 209
7. Conclusion	... 237
<i>Bibliography</i>	... 249
<i>Index</i>	... 265



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## **INTRODUCTION**

**Brief Review of Literature Source—Need for  
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Reason and revelation constitute two important areas of human experience and knowledge. Reason has been defined in many ways. According to its etymology, it is traced to 'ratio.' The meaning and definition of reason have been viewed variously, some of which are as follows: "First, the reason is a special mental faculty (distinct from sensibility and understanding) which is thinking ideas of absolute completeness and unconditionedness and transcends the condition of possible experience. Second, all these mental functions and relations characterized by spontaneity rather than receptivity. In this sense, reason includes both reason and the understanding, but excludes the sensibility. Third, the source of all a-priori synthetic forms of experience. In this sense, reason includes elements of sensibility, understanding and reason. When Kant says that reason is a law-giver to nature, he employs the term in the third sense"<sup>1</sup>. There are so many other definitions of reason discussed in the different contexts which will be referred to in the present thesis.

Reason occupies a place of great importance in the religious as well as philosophical traditions of the West and India. Man, as a rational being, ever aspires to know the ultimate and to establish a close communion with it. He thinks over the problems of life and often seeks to solve them by means of real knowledge. But the distinction between real or true, and false knowledge can be better maintained only through reflective consciousness or reason. It is held by many thinkers that knowledge itself is possible through reason only because we only perceive the things by sense organs but cannot know them altogether without reason. It is reason alone which provides the

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1. Dagobert D. Runes, *The Dictionary of Philosophy*, (Bombay 1, Jaico Publishing House, 1957), p.264.



relational knowledge of two or more things together. Man, as a rational being, by instinct, has reason through which he endeavours to have control over his environment and a grasp of the ultimate reality.

Generally three different sources of knowledge have been accepted in the Indian and Western thought. These are, sense-experience, reason and intuition. Dr Radhakrishnan has held that "while all varieties of cognitive experience result in a knowledge of the real, it is produced in three ways, which are sense experience discursive reasoning and intuitive apprehension"<sup>2</sup> Many thinkers consider the sense-experience as the only direct and reliable source of knowledge. Those philosophers who stress the primacy of experience have been often described as empiricists. In India, Chārvākas hold the view that only sense-experience is a source of right knowledge. Locke has insisted that church man must be set aside. In philosophy he found his starting place in experience. According to him, all knowledge "is derived either from sensation or from reflection upon sensation"<sup>3</sup>. He was of the opinion that some truths are above reason. In describing the relation between the two. "Reason", he said, "is natural revelation, whereby the eternal Father of Light, the Foundation of all knowledge, communicates to mankind that portion of truth which he has laid within the reach of their natural faculties. Revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God, immediately, which reason vouches the truth of, by the testimony and proofs it gives that they come from God. We can rely on revealed truth if we are sure that it has indeed been revealed, and it is the function of reason to provide this assurance"<sup>4</sup>

Reason provides relational knowledge. It is considered as the supreme means of knowledge by all the rationalists in the Western tradition. But it is not a very new concept developed in the Western tradition. It is very well known and found from the very beginning of Indian philosophy, the *Upaniṣads* maintain distinction between 'parāvidyā', the higher knowledge which is obtained through intuition

2. S. Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*, (Bombay: George Allen and Unwin, 1976), second Indian Reprint, p.105.

3. Gerald R. Cragg, *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century*, (Cambridge University Press, London, 1964), p.7.

4. *Ibid*, p.12.



## Introduction

and 'aparā vidyā' the lower knowledge which is obtained through reflective consciousness or reason. "The Upanishadic seers fully realise the fact that no amount of mere intellectual equipment would enable us to intuitively apprehend Reality. They draw the same distinction between *aparā vidyā* and *parā vidyā* between lower and high knowledge, as the Greek philosophers did between *Doxa* and *Epistemē*, between opinion and truth"<sup>5</sup>

Reason has got a genuine success in speculating about the Reality. But it is not given higher place because it cannot reach and realize the Absolute Reality. Reason provides relational knowledge whereas absolute is above relations. It is beyond the ambit of rational power or reason. Intellect, with its symbols and shipboleths, creeds and conventions, is not by itself adequate to the grasp of the real, "from which all speech with the mind turns away unable to reach it"<sup>6</sup> Reason, though takes us beyond understanding, also fails. It does not help us to attain the Reality, which is not merely an idea but a spirit. According to the *Upaniṣads*, there is a higher power which enables us to grasp the Reality. It is the divine insight or mystic intuition, by which man transcends the distinctions of intellect and grasps the spiritual Reality. By this intuitive realization "the unheard becomes heard, the unperceived becomes perceived, and the unknown becomes known"<sup>7</sup>. It is the direct knowledge or immediate knowledge which is attained by the mystics in their moments of illumination. It is the direct experience of the Highest Reality, the self-realization '*swānubhūti*' or the '*ātamsākshātkār*' of the '*mumukṣa*' himself. When it occurs, the knower, knowledge and known, all become one. So, intuition provides direct, immediate and final knowledge of supersensible. Bhaskara, one of the early commentators of the *Brahma Sūtra*, held that, "scripture is our guide with regard to the knowledge of supersensible objects. Reason must follow evidence"<sup>8</sup>. So, the authority lies with scripture.

5. R. D. Ranade, *A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy*, (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, 1968), pp.239-40.

6. S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol.I, (Bombay: Blackie and Son Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1929), second edition, p.174.

7. *Ibid*, p.176.

8. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Brahma Sutra*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1960), p.39.



The main emphasis of Sikh philosophy is to come out of ignorance and to attain the real knowledge of the Absolute and to create the dynamic personality which can be nearer to the Absolute, which can feel His presence and live in tune with Him. Man is to create such conditions in which he can evolve his personality and can live in tune with the Highest or Absolute truth. The basic question, in the very beginning of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the principal scripture of the Sikhs, is, "how then to be true? How to remove the veil of untruthful"<sup>9</sup>?

The answer follows, "His will, inborn in us, thou follow. (Thus is truth attained)"<sup>10</sup>. And the ideal placed before the man is to be like God because according to Sikhism, the type of God we worship will give us the type of the life we live.<sup>11</sup> Now we are to see in Sikhism how far reason helps to attain this knowledge, how far it helps to achieve this ideal and create the dynamic personality and whether reason and revelation are compensatory to each other or they are opposed to each other.

In Sikhism, reason has been considered the source of knowledge. Reason has been applied for the philosophical criticism of the prevalent philosophical and religious notions, traditions, customs and concepts. In modern philosophy, philosophical criticism has been considered the main duty of epistemology. Through this process the concepts of renunciation (*sanyās*), goodness (*nekī*), knowledge (*gīān*) etc. has been analyzed. Analytical criticism has been done of the basic concepts and traditions of different religious thoughts prevalent in India at this time.

Both inductive (*āgman*) and deductive (*nigman*) reasoning has been used for this purpose. First the question has been posed and then the answer is given. For example, while commenting upon the worship

9. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.1.,  
Kiv Sachiārā hoīai kiv kūrhai tutai pāli.

10. *Ibid*, p.1.,  
Hukamu rajāi chalnā Nānak likhiā nāl.

11. *Ibid*, M.I, p.224.  
Jaisā sevai taiso hoi.



of one God, it is stressed that the true ablution is in the service of true Guru. In the form of a dialogue, the issue of sacred bath is raised. If by bathing alone one were to be emancipated, then the frogs bathe continually and forever<sup>12</sup>. The same way, the claim of the priest by birth, is questioned. Such claim negates the merit of human birth as to call oneself a high caste is not natural or true. The process of being born for all human beings is the same. So in order to be a special class, one has to choose to be born in a different manner. The birth is denied to be the criterion to differentiate between high and low caste. To make it clear, the question is raised, whether the brāhmin has milk in his veins instead of blood. Kabir teaches that he alone who contemplates his Lord, is in a position to be called brāhmin among men of God<sup>13</sup>. Reason is used in the above arguments to dispel ignorance and superstition.

The words related to reason picked up in the present thesis as indicated above also are *bādī*, *khojī*, *vīchār*, *soch* and *sīānap*. These words are related with searched, found, obtained, seen, reflection, wisdom, seeking, etc., which may indicate sensory as well as rational knowledge. The secker is advised to see beyond and behind the outer forms. *Bhekh* is outer form of religious man. However, when it becomes a mere appearance and it is divorced from spirit, then it results in forgotten path (*bhūla mārag*). It is a natural part of human reason which may induce a secker to go beyond the outer form of *bhekhu*.

The word *vīchār* (reflection) is used in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* along with *ratan* (jewel) and *Brahamu*. *Parkhe ratan vīchāri* is close to reason because search and recognition is involved in it. And the results of this is *lāhā* (a positive gain). In the same stanza, *Braham vīchār* is also used by Guru Nanak which seems to be revelatory one. The context of reason and revelation is built in such a way that both

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12. *Ibid*, Kabir, p.484 ,

Jal kai majani je gau hovai nit nit meduk nāvahi..

13. *Ibid*, p.324.

Jau tūn brāhamanu brahmanī jāiā.

Tau ān bāt kāhe nahī āiā.



the words seem to be closely related to each other. Guru Nanak says that he, who has the knowledge of the jewel (within himself), reaps profit, over and over again, and gathers his goods within and fulfils himself. Guru directs that trade be done with the True traders and dwell on the Lord, through the Guru's word<sup>14</sup>.

Having in view this explanation, these words put forward the *Gurmat* perspective of reason for which the words *agman* and *nigman* are used.

It is evident that in reason we have the relational knowledge, that is, reason provides us the knowledge of the law of relations among the nature, the universe, or between the man and God. It is related with our sensory experience and our mental faculties. In it we move from the lower level to the higher level. From lower level and lower law of relations we perceive the higher law of relations. From nature, we move to the Absolute. According to Sikh thought, reason, devotion, along with His Grace leads to the realization of one Supreme Being. The theory of knowledge which we find in *Japuji*<sup>15</sup> shows how man moves from lower level to higher level and attains the ultimate Truth. He acquires this knowledge through stages which has been explained in 'khands' in *Japuji*, as follows.

At the first stage or in the first step, man has the ordinary experience of nature. He observes the natural phenomena and becomes aware of the natural laws working there. This is the knowledge related to the sense perception. In the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the mystical term has been used for perceptual medium and it is given the name *Dharam Khand*. Here the man observes "many the elements of water, air, fire; many the Shivas, Krishnas (Him admire). Many the Brahmans who create the beings of various forms, colours, kinds. Many the fields of action, many the mounts of gold, many the Dharuvas receiving instruction (at His Threshold). Many the Indras, suns,

14. *Ibid.* M.I, p.56.

Lāhā ahinisi nautanā parkhe ratanu vīchāri.

15. *Japuji* is a composition of Guru Nanak which occurs in the very beginning of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.



moons, many the stellars, many the earthly regions, many the Sidhas, Buddhas, Nāthas, many the goddesses of myriad kinds. Many the gods, demons, sages, many the Jewels born of oceans. Many the norms of life, many the forms of speech; many the devotees of spirit, many the kings of kings. *Many many*, are the forms of being”<sup>16</sup>. Here we have the perceptual knowledge, we perceive individual things through the senses. Here we have knowledge derived from experiences.

The second stage of knowledge is *Gīan Khand*. These stages are inter-related. The first stage, the *Dharam Khand* where the man observes the natural laws leads to the second stage the *Gīan Khand* in which *Saram Khand* the third stage can also be included. In the *Gīan Khand*, the seeker goes out to seek more and more of His creation in all its wonderful variety. In the *Saram Khand*, he withdraws himself into his inner-mind in order to reflect on what has been given by knowledge. Here man applies his rational faculties. The knowledge derived at this stage is indirect and through inference. It is rational insight and action based. It is experiencing the higher truths (*nād, binod, kod, anand*). *Gharīai* is the key word in this *khand*. It amounts to spiritual achievements. In this domain of knowledge, knowing abounds. Myriad kinds of joy there, sights, sounds. Wonder prevails here. Here is inner consciousness moulded, Reason fashioned, mind illumined and understanding enlarged. Here the consciousness, cognitive insight, mind and intellect are transformed. This is the stage where the consciousness of gods and perfect men is fashioned, that is, the seeker possesses such consciousness. So here is the vision of the godly trained<sup>17</sup>. This is unique contribution that in Sikhism effort has been placed at the third step. This is '*Gharīai surat mat man budh*'. The fourth stage or the final level of knowledge is the *Karam Khand*. It naturally evolves. Here the faith is in tune with the effort. It transcends the human reason. This knowledge is metaphysical one. This is to be in tune with the spirit. It is the situation of doubtlessness. Here *Rām vasai* is experienced. The result of which is *nā ko marai nā*

16. *Ibid*, M.I, p.7.

Dharam khand kā eho dharamu.

Gīan khand kā ākhahu karamu.

17. *Ibid*, M.I, pp 7-8.

Gīan Khand mah gīanu parchand.



*thāgā jāi*. The first three stages of knowledge lead to this fourth and the higher stage. The intellect at the fourth stage has immediate knowledge. Only when we see a thing is present with us, only then are we, in a manner of speaking, one with it. Thus the perception, the reason with its inference, and derivations points the way, the goal is attained only in immediate intuition. It is the domain of Grace which is expressed through power (*jatu*). There are heroes, brave and mighty, throbbing with the spirit of the Almighty. There are myriads of *Sītās*, rapt in glory, beyond words is their beauty. Death or guile can cheat them not, yea, that in whose hearts dwells the Lord. The devotees from all the spheres are here<sup>18</sup>.

These first four stages of knowledge culminates in the fifth stage or level which is termed as *Sach Khand*. It is the level of divine knowledge. It is revelatory one. Here the man experiences the revealed truth. He becomes *sachīār*. Here he realizes the working of the Divine Law, how Supreme Will works through the natural order (*hukam*). When the seeker realizes the Divine *hukam*, he surrenders his will to the Supreme will. He continues to remain in society and also tries to do good to others. In this domain of truth, the Formless Abides, He watches what He creates. In it is the whole world, the universe and the sphere, of which no limit, no count, can be made. World upon worlds of creation, He commands, all act here as He wills. He, who sees this, and contemplates, is filled with joyous zeal<sup>19</sup>. It is the realization of the Divine Will, Divine Order who is working behind the whole creation. It is within not without. The within must be fused with without. It is due to this factor that the *rehat* aspect (the conduct) is also stressed by the Gurus. *Rehat* in Sikhism is the all comprehensive realization in the sphere of actions. This according to Guru Nanak, is the altruistic activity of the *Jivan Mukta*<sup>20</sup>.

*The Dictionary of Philosophy* defines revelation as the communication to man of the Divine Will. This communication has

18. *Ibid*, p.8.

Karam khand kī bānī jorū.

19. *Ibid*, M.I, p.8.

Vekhai vīgasai kari vicharū.

Nanak kathna kararha sarū.

20. Avtar Singh, *Ethics of the Sikhs*, (Patiala, Punjabi University, 1970), p.215.



taken, in the history of religions, almost every conceivable form, e.g. the results of lot casting, oracular declaration, dreams, visions, ecstatic experiences (induced by whatever means, such as intoxicants), books, prophets, unusual characters, revered traditional practices, storms pestilence, etc. The general conception of revelation has been that the divine communication comes in ways unusual, by means not necessarily amenable to ordinary channels of investigation. This, however, is not a necessary corollary, revelation of the Divine Will may well come through ordinary channels, the give-and-take of every day experience, through reason and reflection and intuitive insight<sup>21</sup>.

There is, however, great difference of opinion in respect of the nature and role of the reason and revelation. Some scholars have even classified world religions on the basis of belief in revelation. According to one such view, revelation is the basis of Christianity and Judaism<sup>22</sup>. Such a division, however, is neither satisfactory nor perhaps true. We know that Hinduism accepts *Śruti* as unveiling or disclosing of that which was formally hidden. "The *Śruti* is prior to mystical perception. It is divine revelation"<sup>23</sup>. We are also told that, "There is no contradiction between the *Śruti* and sense perception. The one deals with the suprasensible, the other with the sensible. They are valid in their respective spheres"<sup>24</sup>. It is further added that, "nor is there any contradiction between the *Śruti* and reason. The super sensuous is suprarational but not irrational in character"<sup>25</sup>. So reason and revelation are not conceived in antithetical terms. One modern scholar of Hindu mysticism observes that, "the Vedas, then, are the only repository of the highest truths, and the function of reason is only to attempt to reconcile these truths with our experience and sense-observation"<sup>26</sup>.

21. Dagobert. D. Runes, *op.cit.*, p.271.

22. F. Max Muller, *Natural Religion*, (New Delhi, Asian Educational, first Asian reprint, 1979, p.50. "These two religions were considered in Europe at least, as different in kind from all the rest, being classed as super natural and revealed in opposition to all other religions which were treated as not revealed as natural".

23. Swami Satprakashananda, *Methods of Knowledge*, (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., first edition, 1965), p.203.

24. *Ibid*, p.219.

25. Swami Satprakashananda, *op.cit.*, p.222.

26. S. N. Dasgupta, *Hindu Mysticism*, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, first Indian edition, 1927), p.16.



Religion deals essentially with three subjects: the nature of Reality, the nature of man and his relation to this Reality, and the way to reach this Reality. The first two are the subject matter of philosophy proper and it is the third subject which brings the other two also into the domain of religion. As observed by Kapur Singh, "as long as religion merely defines the nature of Reality and seeks to lay down the true values of human activity, it is no more than philosophy and ethics, but when, it seeks and promises to help human soul to take the truths to heart and to put them into action within the object of resolving the problem of suffering, which is inherent in the innermost core of man, the self-consciousness, then it becomes religion proper"<sup>27</sup>. Religion is the response of the whole person, not merely his rational faculties to what he finds of ultimate value in life. It is an acceptance and commitment to whatever he takes to be of ultimate value is existence.

What are the implications of this fact that we are thus completely involved? There must be something outside ourselves, that makes its claim upon us, yet because we often think of ourselves as seeking for life's meaning, this may not be so obvious. This search for life's meaning, has a peculiar nature all its own. Religion is the way in which a life comes to a focus. This seeking is different from scientific research, for its object is not so much how things actually are but how they ought to be. It is normative rather than descriptive in nature. If we fail to note this difference, we may think of God as some remote object, waiting to be discovered by us. And we shall likely to think in terms of projecting our own experience of this world to what is beyond this world, from the natural, in other words, to the supernatural. "When we observe the harmony in nature, the delicate balance of so many factors in nature which makes our lives and the entire universe possible, we conclude that only a supreme intelligence—God—could have fashioned it all. God, thus seen, is a rational inference from our knowledge of the world"<sup>28</sup>.

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27. Gopal Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, English version, Vol.2, (Delhi, Gurdas Kapur and Sons, first impression, 1960), p.1.

28. Paul Hassert, *Introduction to Christianity*, (London, Ruskin House, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., Museum Street), p.47.



The movement from God to man through which the whole of a man is involved is called revelation. "It is God making Himself known to us, disclosing Himself so that we, in turn, must do something in response. Our problem, therefore, is not to project our thought to Him; it is more simply to recognize and understand His approach to us. Revelation in some form is basic to all religions. It accounts for the experience of complete involvement apparent in the sense of obligation"<sup>29</sup>. Revelation is God's disclosing of Himself that elicits response of faith, the whole person respond, which is of the essence of religion.

How revelation takes place? In reply to this question, commonly three main answers are given, that is, in nature, in mystical experience and through events in history<sup>30</sup>. This is predominantly a semitic view. According to Eastern religions, especially Hinduism, there are four ways in which the *Brahman*, the Supreme Reality reveals Himself; "(a) *General Revelation*, the world at large is a revelation of Supreme Reality, (b) *Vedic Revelation*, that the *Veda* is promulgated at the beginning of each world cycle of *Isvara*. (c) Revelation through *Avātāra*, and (d) Revelation in *Anubhūti*, a direct experience of *Brahman*, which arises from meditation on Upaniṣadic texts"<sup>31</sup>.

Philosophical division of revelation is believed to be of two types. One is propositional conception of revelation, according to which, that which is revealed is a body of religious truths capable of being expressed in proposition<sup>32</sup>. "Heilsgeschichtlich" conception, which has been adopted in the twentieth century maintains that revelation consists not in the promulgation of divinely guaranteed truths but in the performance of self-revealing divine acts within human history<sup>33</sup>. We shall discuss all these concepts in detail in the related chapters. Here we seek to offer brief introduction to the concept of revelation in Sikhism.

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29. *Ibid*, p.47.

30. *Ibid*, p.53.

31. K. Satchidananda Murty, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedanta*, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, reprint, 1974), pp. 6,7 and 9.

32. Paul Edwards, Editor-in-Chief, *Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol.7 (New York, the Macmillan Company and the Free Press), p.89.

33. *Ibid*, p.190.



According to Sikh thought, man can have the direct communion with God through meditation on His *Nām*. The idea of revelation in Sikhism is unique one. "The Guru does not claim himself to be an incarnation of God—which theory he severely repudiates—but sometimes he does represent himself to be the spokesman of God. The knowledge contained in the hymns is described to be God given"<sup>34</sup>. The revelation of truth, the insight, to the Guru is referred to by the Guru himself. The Guru had the direct experience of truth and then expressed this experience in his own language. The *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, contains the mystic experience of the Gurus. It is the expression of the Divine Truth realized by them. We find many references to this effect in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, and Guru's Biographical Literature, and in the writings of Bhai Gurdas, the eminent Sikh scholar.

We come across in the *Janam Sakhīs*, the story of the rivulet *Vein*. We are told how Guru Nanak was rapt in meditation for three days in the river. It is said that Guru had ascended to the plane of truth and appeared before the Supreme Lord. On the third day, he comes out of the river and declared, "there is no Hindu and no Muslim". Bhai Gurdas has given a mystical account of this event in his *Vārs*<sup>35</sup>. He refers to the grace received by Guru Nanak in the Divine Court. We find references to this unique experience in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*<sup>36</sup>.

Some of the words occurring in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* which refer to the Revelation are: *śabadi*, *gūrbani*, *bānī*, *dristau*, *pargat*, *pargās*, *dikhālīā*, *kahan*, *kahāe*, *kahat*, *jofī*, *gīān* and *braham-gīān*. The process of this unique revelation in Sikhism takes place in three ways. The ultimate Reality, the absolute Truth (*śabad*) is revealed to the Guru in the mystic experience, in a direct communion with God. Then this ultimate Truth (the *śabad*) is communicated by the Guru to the Sikh. This is, in a way, general revelation. Then the

34. Sher Singh, *Philosophy of Sikhism*, (Amritsar, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, 1980), p.56.

35. *Bhai Gurdas Vārān*, (Amritsar, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, third edition), p.12.

36. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.150.  
Hao dhādī vekār kārē lāia.



*Gurmukh* or *Brahman-giānī* is enabled to comprehend the ultimate Truth. He is enabled to have a communion with God. Though he rises to this experience with the blessing of the Guru, but here the medium—the Guru — does not remain a mediator. The *Brahman-giānī* or *Gurmukh* experiences the *śabad*.

So many references are available in the hymns of the Gurus where the Guru tells us that the ultimate Truth or *śabad* is communicated to the Guru in communion with God. Guru says that as he receives the word of God, so does he utter its contents. Nanak utters the speech of Truth for, now is the time to utter the Truth<sup>37</sup>.

Guru says that what he conveys, is revealed by Lord<sup>38</sup>. According to Guru Ramdas, "let this be known to every one that the Word of the Guru alone is True, for, the Lord Himself speaks (through the Guru's word)<sup>39</sup>. The word of Guru springs from the perfect Guru and merges in the True Lord<sup>40</sup>. Guru is blessed with the Word of God, and all his woes are dispelled. The Lord is compassionate to everyone, and Nanak proclaims this truth to all"<sup>41</sup>. In Sikh thought, we also find that "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. For, the Word is sufficient and does not depend on any other means for its meaning. Being coeval with sound, the Word is therefore also eternal. The authenticity of the Word is derived from its being uttered by those who were the direct witness of the Truth"<sup>42</sup>.

37. *Ibid*, p.722.

Jaisi mai āvai khasam ki bānī.

Taisaṅ kari giānu ve lālo..

38. *Ibid*, M.5, p.763.

Hau āpahu bolī na jānadā mai kahiā sabhu hukmaū jīu.

39. *Ibid*, M.4, p.308.

Satigur kī bānī sati sati kari jānahu

Gursikhahu hari kartā āpi muhahu kadhāc.

40. *Ibid*, p.754.

Vāhu vāhu pūre gur kī bānī.

Pūre gur te upaṅ sāchi samānī.

41. *Ibid*, M.5, p.628.

Dhuri kī bānī āi jin sagalī chint mitāi.

42. Dr. Gopal Singh, *op.cit.*, p.xxxii.

The whole universe is the manifestation of the *śabad*, the ultimate Truth. And this revelation is shown by the Guru. There are so many examples available in *Gurbānī* for this type of revelation. Some of these are "God is the only one who establishes and dis-establishes all. He unites and separates and destroys and brings back to life"<sup>43</sup>. The Lord Himself sees all, and makes us see (His wonders. But, He is pleased not if one forces one's will. "He, who built the vessels (of our bodies), and put the nectar within them, through the loving adoration of Him, alone is the Mind Satiated"<sup>44</sup>. The world is moving and has its being within the three modes while God abides in the fourth state of bliss. The perfect Guru has revealed the whole truth for man. God abides in the True Name<sup>45</sup>. The Guru tells us of the omnipresence of God. Guru Arjan says that God fills the earth as well as the sea, and before whom the high and low are alike<sup>46</sup>.

Name is the qualitative expression of the pervasive God's personality. Once this All-pervading is realized, one merges in the Being of God. The Guru's word shows the way to the realization of God. Hence the Guru's word is to be uttered, sung, heard, to be dwelt upon and contemplated. However, to be like Him, to realize the self one's physical activity of life is to be guided by a God awakened mind. This is possible when the seeker submits his mind to the Guru.

The result of this process of realization is that one is in communion with God. Such person is called *Brahmagiānī* or *Gurmukh* in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. He is qualified to apprehend the supreme Reality, the ultimate Truth. Guru Nanak says that the hearing of the *Gurbānī* enables one to realize one's self and one is infused by the Spiritual Light<sup>47</sup>. The Guru further says that if a person knows his

43. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1034.

āpe thāpi uthāpe āpe.

44. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1038.

Nirmal joti sarab jagjvanu guri anhad sabadi dikhāiā.

45. *Ibid*, p.1048.

Eko sevī avaru na dūja.

46. *Ibid*, M.5, p.1075.

Gur dristāiā sabhanī thāin.

47. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1023.

Sravan sarot raje gurbānī joti joti milāi he.



real nature, we will be able to realize the Spiritual Light<sup>48</sup>.

But the Guru must be the true Guru. He ought to have realize the True one. He should direct people to worship the one and the only one God. The Guru should discourage the people from worshipping the Guru. The Guru, in physical form, is fallible because body is a combination of five elements and these are not eternal ones. The word is the True Guru. In this sense, the *bānī* is revealed by God through Guru.

Revelation, in some form, is the common element of most of the religions of the world. Reason also has been accepted in varying degrees and applied in the most of the religions. Both are important sources of knowledge and are related with the knowledge of the Absolute or God. From the view point of the religious knowledge, and for the common man, the source of the knowledge through reason and revelation are scriptures. The basis of the reason and revelation in this respect is the sacred scripture of the Sikhs, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. The study of the nature and scope of reason and revelation in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* appears to be very promising because Sikhism is, relatively speaking, a modern religion. The use of reason appears to be an important part of the scripture. None of the scholars have taken up this field of study seriously in a systematic manner.

To understand reason and revelation in Sikhism, it may be necessary to study scripture and religious traditions because the role of reason and revelation are directly related to both of them. We have, therefore decided to go through the principle sources as well as other related material. We propose to call the former as the primary sources and the latter as the secondary sources. If we make a study of Sikh revelation then we may come to know that revelation is the direct experience of God and the expression of this experience in language implies reason. It has been experienced by the man and expressed by him in his own language. Man is rational being and that rationality implies reason. So reason and revelation are interrelated. But in spite of their inter relation they are independent subjects for study. So Sikh

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48. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1024.

Chīnai āpu pachhānai sōi jotī jotī milāi he.



scripture and the literature related to secondary sources have been used and analysed for the present research work in order to present as complete a picture as possible. To be specific we may divide them. The basis for this distinction between the primary sources and secondary sources being that the compositions of the Gurus themselves have been accepted as the primary source. The rest of the literature which may contribute towards the understanding of the concepts of reason and revelation in Sikhism, although not the composition of the Gurus themselves, have been accepted as secondary sources. This type of division has already been accepted<sup>49</sup>. Now the brief study and review of these sources have been given like this.

## The Primary Sources

*Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is the central scripture of the Sikhs. It is also called the *Adi Granth*. It is the principle and the primary source for the present research. It is the most comprehensive literature on Sikhism, belonging to the period of its exposition by the Gurus. The fifth Guru, Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606 A.D.), compiled it in 1604 A.D. "At the conclusion of his task, the Guru told his Sikhs that the *Granth Sahib* was the embodiment of the Gurus and, should, therefore, be held in extreme reverence"<sup>50</sup>. The Guruship was conferred by the tenth and last Guru, Gobind Singh (1666-1708 A.D.) in 1708 A.D. before his death. In this context, the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is the primary sacred Sikh scripture of the Sikhs. Giani Gian Singh has confirmed this faith in his couplet (*Dohira*) and expressed the view that word-Guru, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is the living embodiment of the Sikh Gurus and represents their spirit. A prominent historian of modern times, while confirming this, has remarked that the

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49. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.5.

"The criterion for the distinction between the primary and the secondary sources being that the source which has been established to be the personal contribution of the Gurus may be treated as a primary source, while others that have a bearing on the development of ethical precepts in Sikhism, but are not directly traceable to the Gurus, may be treated as secondary sources".

50. Sher Singh, *op.cit.*, p.50.



sacred status conferred on the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is not comparable with any other religious book<sup>51</sup>. Moreover, according to the tradition in Sikh religion when there arise two views about some problem, the decision goes into the favour of one which is more close to and is based on *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. It is called *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* to highlight the fact that it is the present Guru of the Sikhs. It is source of light showing the path leading to the highest goal of spirituality. That is why this religious Granth of the Sikhs has been considered as the primary source for the present research. We shall, therefore, treat it as the basis for the study of reason and revelation in Sikhism.

*Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is a scripture of fourteen hundred and thirty pages. It includes the hymns and teachings of six Gurus, the first Guru, Nanak Dev (1469-1539), second Guru, Angad Dev (1504-1553), third Guru, Amardas (1476-1574), fourth Guru, Ramdas (1534-1581), fifth Guru, Arjan Dev (1563-1606) and ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur (1622-1675). There is one *sloka* which some scholars credit to Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last human Guru (1666/1708). Besides the hymns of the Gurus, the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* includes the hymns of sixteen saint poets, both Hindu and Muslims. These are Jaidev, Namdev, Trilochan, Parmanand, Sadna, Beni, Ramanand, Dhanna, Pipa, Sain, Kabir, Ravidas, Farid, Bhikhan and Sur Das. All these bhagats belonged to different regions of India and to the different period of history. They composed their hymns before the origin of Sikhism and Guru Arjan included them in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The period covered by them is long, from Jaidev (1170) onwards to Kabir (1440-1518) and Sheikh Farid (1173-1266)<sup>52</sup>. The medium for the compositions of the hymns is poetry and it is composed in *rāgas* (rhythm and metre). These hymns of the Gurus contain the spiritual experience of the Gurus which is of the nature of mystic intuition. "The Guru's idea was to present to the world a book which should serve as a text book of universal religion, and something which is essential and

51. Kapur Singh, *Parasharprasha*, (Jullundur, Hind Publishers, 1959), p.26.

"Tirumurrai and the Granth claim the status of primary sacred writings, of the Vedas itself, while the literature of the Bhakti movement claims for itself the status of secondary sacred literature".

52. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.7.



common to the truly religious of a faith....The teachings of the *Granth* are primarily spiritual and secondarily philosophical. Peace of the soul is the constant aim before the Guru"<sup>53</sup>.

The *Dasam Granth* is also regarded as the sacred literature of the Sikh religion. The hymns included in it are generally considered to be the composition of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh. There is some controversy about the authorship of the *Dasam Granth* from the time of Bhai Mani Singh (1634-1737 A.D.). According to a scholar, the scholars of Sikhism are still not agreed whether the whole of it is a primary source or not<sup>54</sup>. The authorship of the *Dasam Granth* is not the subject of the present research and according to a scholar, "as far as speculative philosophy is concerned, Guru Gobind Singh's views do not materially differ from the views of his predecessors contained in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*"<sup>55</sup>. This view seems to be based on those hymns of the *Dasam Granth* whose authorship is generally traced to Guru Gobind Singh. Nirmalas believe that the whole of the book was written by the Guru and his purpose in writing—it was not to give us a rival sacred book but to throw side-lights on the *Guru Granth Sahib*<sup>56</sup>. Keeping in view the importance of the *Dasam Granth* it has been included in the primary sources.

## Secondary Sources (Guru Period)

Next to the primary sources, Bhai Gurdas' (1559-1639 A.D.) writings are considered to be guide, to the understanding of the spiritual views of the Gurus. His name comes first in the secondary sources. Bhai Gurdas was the scribe to whom the first recension of the *Guru Granth* was dictated by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev. He lived his life in close contact with the Guru. He was also the first missionary of Sikhism because he did a lot to preach Sikhism. His own compositions are *vārs* and *kabits* and *swayyas*, which claims a high degree of authenticity and validity. Keeping in view his missionary works and

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53. Sher Singh, *op.cit.*, p.55.

54. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.6.

55. Sher Singh, *op.cit.*, p.58.

56. *Ibid*, p.59.



## Introduction

which the Saint Paul enjoys in Christianity<sup>57</sup>. Bhai Gurdas tried to analyse the Sikh teachings on the basis of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Bhai Sahib's compositions are very simple and instructive. It is a treasure of Sikh religion's ideals and norms. It seems the best code of conduct of the Sikhs. According to the words of Guru Arjan, one gets true spirit of Sikhism from Bhai Gurdas' writings and it is the key to the Sikh scripture<sup>58</sup>. One of the scholars, apart from regarding his compositions as the best and purest *Rahitnāmā* (the code of conduct), has accepted them "to hold the key to the Sikh spiritual treasury". The works of Bhai Gurdas contain the richness of Hindu, Muslim and Sikh cultural scholarship<sup>59</sup>. According to another scholar, "Bhai Gurdas has combined in his writings religious ideals with humanistic moral precepts"<sup>60</sup>. "On the whole his work is the best attempt at the orientation and glorification of the Sikh religion, at a time when the foundation of the religion was still going on and a genius like that of Guru Gobind Singh was yet to appear on the stage to give the religion a finishing touch"<sup>61</sup>. Bhai Gurdas is the first interpreter who has sought to express the hidden ideas of revelation and reason in Sikhism. Bhai Gurdas' ideas have been considered very sound and authentic in the Sikh world because while preparing the first copy of the *Guru Granth* in Guru Arjan's company, he got the opportunity to understand the hidden meanings of *Gurbānī*. While keeping in view this fact, Bhai Gurdas' compositions have been considered the first one in the secondary sources of the Guru-period.

In the secondary sources of the Guru period, Bhai Nand Lal's (1633-1705 A.D.) name comes after Bhai Gurdas. Bhai Nand Lal was one of the many poets in Guru Gobind Singh's *darbār*. He was, however, a most revered poet as he was very close to the Guru. He had ample time to learn from the Guru the deeper meanings of the revelation in the hymns of the Guru. We have got the following books of this ardent disciple and a sincere lover of the Sikhism i.e. *Jot Bigās*,

57. Bawa Budh Singh, *Hans Chog*, (Ludhiana, Lahore Book Shop, 1949), p.221.

58. Kahan Singh, *Gurmat Sudhakar*, (Patiala, Language Department, 1970), p.86.

59. Mohan Singh, *A History of Punjabi Literature*, (Amritsar, Kasturi Lal and Sons, 1956), p.47.

60. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.12.

61. Sher Singh, *op.cit.*, p.3.



*Zindagī Nāmā*, *Tousif-o-Sanā*, *Ganj-Nāmā*, *Insha-i-Dastūr*, *Aruz-ul-Alfāz*, *Diwān-i-Goyā*, *Khatmah* <sup>62</sup>. Out of these books, only a study is available on *Zindagī Nāmā* and *Diwān-a-Goyā*. He was a scholar of Arabic and Persian and the work related to these books is limited only to the translation and description in Punjabi language. It is agreed that the name of the book *Zindagī Nāmā* was given by Guru Gobind Singh himself when he read the book and felt very pleased by it. Bhai Nand Lal had himself called it *Bandgi-Nāmā* <sup>63</sup>. In spite of this background, there are two views prevalent about Bhai Nand Lal. According to one, his writings apart from the mystic love that he breathe and a philosophical colouring which he has given them cannot be taken as an analysis of Sikhism <sup>64</sup>. It seems that the supporters of this view have not made Bhai Nand Lal's books the basis for their research. The view which grows out of such type of study seems to be one sided and not very deep and cannot be accepted as final. According to the second view, the compositions of Bhai Nand Lal are considered true description of the Sikh spiritualism <sup>65</sup>. There is no scope for the detailed description of these two views at this place but from these indications, one factor becomes clear that spiritualism is the main subject of Bhai Nand Lal's compositions. In spite of this fact, these compositions have not been studied in the context of spiritual and revelatory perspectives. These writings occupy an important and authentic place among the secondary sources of the Guru-period.

The school of interpreters appear to have emerged during the time of Guru Gobind Singh. One of these traditions is known as Nirmala tradition. There are two views about the origin of Nirmalas also. According to one view, they trace their origins to the Guru Nanak's period and according to the second, this tradition started from

62. Kahan Singh, *Mahan Kosh*, (Patiala, Language Department, 1974), p.723.

63. *Ibid*, p.238.

64. Sher Singh, *op.cit.*, p.12.

65. Sayyad Abid Hussain, *Gazaliat Bhai Nand Lal Goya*, (Patiala, Punjabi University, 1973), p.12.



the period of Guru Gobind Singh. There is no doubt that Guru Gobind Singh commissioned some Sikhs to Varanasi the then seat of learning to learn Sanskrit language and the ancient Hindu thought and then to impart their knowledge to other people irrespective of the caste and creed distinction<sup>66</sup>. They are mostly the Sanskrit scholars as exponents of non-dualism, their philosophical point of view, is important. The philosophical literature of this school began with Gulab Singh (1732 A.D.) who was the disciple of Sant Man Singh, a contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh<sup>67</sup>. He wrote many books: *Bhavaramrit*-1777 A.D., *Mokash Panthu*-1778, *Adhyatam Ramayan*-1782, *Prabodh Chandra Natak*-1792. Pandit Sadhu Singh, a Nirmala disciple of Pandit Gulab Singh, was a great scholar and in his exposition he seeks to remain closer to the traditional Sikh interpretation than his predecessor Gulab Singh of Sekhaw<sup>68</sup>. His books are *Gursikhia Prabhakar* and *Sri Mukhvak Sidhan Joti*. These deal with philosophy and the interpretation of some of the select hymns of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. Pandit Tara Singh Narotam, the *gurbhāi* of Pandit Sadhu Singh, wrote many books most of which are commentaries. One of them, *Gurmat Nirnai Sagar*, published in 1877 A.D. is of philosophical nature<sup>69</sup>. The philosophical activities of the Nirmala school seem to have come to a close in the twentieth century. This appears to have been the effect of the modern revivalist movements of Sikhism under the influence of the British rule in the Punjab<sup>70</sup>.

Along with the Nirmala, the second great tradition started in the time of Guru Gobind Singh was the *Giānī* tradition who were the theologians and expositionists of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. Bhai Mani Singh (1634-1737) is generally accepted to be the founder of this tradition. He received this training from the Guru<sup>71</sup>.

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66. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.20.

"The Nirmalas trace their origin from Guru Nanak onwards, but there are some scholars who are of the view that the movement started during Guru Gobind Singh's period. He deputed some Sikhs to go to Varanasi, the then centre of learning to receive education in classical languages and thought and then impart the same to all persons irrespective of caste distinctions".

67. Sher Singh, *op.cit.*, p.5.

68. *Ibid*, p.5.

69. *Ibid*, p.6.

70. *Ibid*, p.6.

71. *Ibid*, p.8.



The compositions of Bhai Mani Singh are important along the secondary sources of the Guru period. Bhai Mani Singh enjoyed the privilege of being in close company of Guru Gobind Singh and it has been accepted that he prepared a copy of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* under the directions of Guru Gobind Singh from whom he had the opportunity to listen the meanings and interpretation of *Gurbānī*. He was the perfect (*Pūran*) *Gursikh* and the knower of *Gurmat*. He subsequently looked after the religious duties of Harmandir Sahib and in that period he spent his time in the exposition of Sikhism as learnt by him from Guru Gobind Singh himself. His main method of religious preaching was through the interpretation of *Gurbānī*<sup>72</sup>. The Muslim Sufi saints were very much impressed by his interpretation of *Gurbānī*<sup>73</sup>. His two compositions are *Gīan Ratanāvalī* and *Bhagat Ratanāvalī*. In these books Bhai Mani Singh has expounded the Sikh tenents and has also cited from the Puranic literature to stress some points. None has tried yet to study these writings in spiritual or revelatory context. To accept the writings of such a great Sikh scholar, Bhai Mani Singh, as the basis for the present research, these have been included in the secondary sources of Guru period.

## Janam Sākhī

*Janam Sākhī* are the scattered biographical account of Guru Nanak's life, composed by various narrators. The important among them is the one associated with Bala (also called *Paide Mokhe Wālī Janam Sākhī*) and the other credited to Manohar Das Meharban (1581-1640). The *Janam Sākhī* by Manohar Das Meharban has been edited in Punjabi language in 1962 by Sikh History Research Department, Amritsar. *Janam Sākhī* of Bhai Manohar Das Meharban did not receive much attention for a long time, because Meharban was closely related to Prithi Chand who sought to create a schism in Sikhism. Bhai Meharban was the grandson of the fourth Guru Ramdas and a nephew of Guru Arjan, the fifth Guru. The treatment of themes

72. Bhangu Rattan Singh, *Prāchīn Panth Parkāsh*, (Amritsar, Wazir Hind Press, 1952), p.222.

73. T. Giani Gian Singh, *Tavārīkh Gurū Khālsā*, (Patiala, Language Department, 1970), p.124.



in this *Janam Sākhī* is far superior to the then written similar narrations. Bhai Meharban shows deeper philosophic knowledge of the doctrine and also displays greater skill in the handling of the problem, along with some influence of the earlier non-dualistic traditions<sup>74</sup>. There is a great number of *Janam Sākhīs*, with some differences in versions and contents. The main purpose is to give moral and practical lessons to the common people through the life incidents of Guru Nanak.

## Secondary Sources (After Guru Period)

Among the sources of after-Guru period comes the writings from 1708 A.D. till now, which can be related with the reason and revelation in Sikhism directly or indirectly. This is a very long period and in this period Sikh scholars and the Eastern and Western scholars who came into their contact, have written about Sikh religion and Sikh history. All those writings can be included in the secondary sources. From the view point of the study of reason and revelation in Sikhism, a detailed study of every writer is not required for our present purpose. But it seems helpful to divide them according to period to highlight the prominent features of their writings.

### From 1708 A.D. to 1857 A.D.

This period starts after the death of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 and continues till mutiny (1857). During this period, most of the writings concerned with the Sikh religion which are available gave the primary place to the expression of Sikh history. The expression of Sikh ideas based on historical facts is also found in these books. So in these books the important place is given to *Janam Sākhīs* and we find *Janam Sākhīs* by Mani Singh, *Janam Sākhī* by Cole Brooke, etc. In these books, it has been tried to express the incidents related with Guru Nanak's life. Along with the life of Guru Nanak, in these *Janam Sākhīs*, the discussions (*Gośatī*) with other saints are also included. The first authentic *Gośatī* known as '*Sidh Gośatī*' has been included in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*<sup>75</sup>. It is a dialogue between Guru Nanak and

74. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.12-13.

75. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.938.



the Sidhās. However, there are many biographical narrations which are also known as *Gośt* but these do not form a part of the scripture. *Gośt Baba Nanak* (manuscript), *Gośt Ātmā Parmātmā Kī* (manuscript) and *Madīne kī Gośati* (manuscript) are available and these compositions are the theoretical discussions and these can be accepted as the primary attempts to express the reason and revelation in Sikhism.

Guru Gobind Singh's *darbār* was famous for the respect and honour of scholars, poets and literary persons. These literary persons had written many original works also, but the most discussed are the translation works which Guru Gobind Singh had inspired to do from the Indian religious scriptures. This is pointed out in the *Krishnavār*, included in *Dasam Granth*. The purpose for this literature has been told as the zeal for 'religious war' (*dharam yudh*) and not for any other lust<sup>76</sup>. But this literature is not available. There are only indirect references to it in the later writings.

In the last decade of the eighteenth century, the books of Western writers about Sikh history had started appearing. Who was the first writer among them? About this there is a controversy among the scholars. One Swiss Engineer Colonel Polier has been accepted the first European writer about Sikh history. He wrote about Sikh history in 1788 A.D.<sup>77</sup> But among the material found about Sikhs, the first example accepted by another scholar is the letter written by English envoys which they wrote from Delhi to England on 10th of March, 1716 A.D. These English envoys saw the procession of 780 Sikhs prisoners at Delhi with their own eyes. Two thousand bleeding heads of Sikhs hanging on the spears were leading the procession<sup>78</sup>. After this procession with which patience the Sikh sacrificed themselves has also been mentioned in this letter. Dr Fauja Singh has accepted Major Brown the first European writer instead of these two, who have written

76. *Krishnavatar*, Vol. II, p.798.

77. Ganda Singh, *The Punjab Past and Present*, Vol.IV, Part II, (Patiala, Punjabi University, Oct. 1970), p.232.

Colonel Polier's 'The Siques' is the first known connected account of the Sikh people written by a European.

78. Sher Singh, *op.cit.*, p.14.



in detail for the first time, about the political rising of the Sikhs and the conditions prevailing at that time<sup>79</sup>.

During this period, another English writer, George Foster, has written about Sikh history. The inspiration behind his writings was to know the secret of the increasing strength of the Sikhs<sup>80</sup>. Along with the rising power of the Sikhs, the urge to know the Sikh religion and the history seems increasing with the English writers<sup>81</sup>. In this context, the first systematic book is written by John Malcolm which he wrote in 1812 A.D.<sup>82</sup> This book of Malcolm is the superior one in all respects from the books written earlier to him, he has stated this himself<sup>83</sup>. Malcolm's contemporary is Khushwaqat Rai who finished '*Tawārīkh-Sikhan*' in 1839 A.D. This is available in the form of a manuscript. The still more systematic work than these two is J.D. Cunningham's (1812-1851) '*A History of the Sikhs*'. This book was first printed in 1849 A.D. Apart from this, Wilson printed a book about Hindu cults in 1832 in which the conditions of Sikhs is also included<sup>84</sup>. One thing is clear from the fact that all the books written by English writers were printed and none paid any attention to print any book by the native writers. From this point of view, these books cannot be accepted as the secondary source for the study of reason and revelation in Sikhism because the efforts has not been done to express the Sikh ideals in a clear and systematic way in these books. But in reaction of these books, the books composed by the Sikh scholars, can be considered the secondary sources for the study of reason and revelation in Sikhism.

The prominent writer of this period is Bhai Santokh Singh (1845-1900 Bikrami Sambat). Bhai Santokh Singh wrote '*Gurpartāp Sūrya*', then '*Guru Nanak Parkāsh*' which deals with the life of the ten Gurus. Then '*Tīka Japuji Garbganjani*'. Dr Sher Singh says about '*Gurpartāp Sūrya*', "The Sikhs had no epics and the big volumes of

79. Fauja Singh, ed. *Historians and Historiography of the Sikhs*, (New Delhi, Oriental Publishers, 1978), p.2.

80. *Ibid*, pp.13-14.

81. *Ibid*, pp.13-14.

82. *Sketch of the Sikhs*.

83. Fauja Singh, ed. *op.cit.*, pp. 15,23.

84. Wilson, H.H., *A Sketch of the Religious Sects of Hindus*.



*Gurpartāp Sūrya* very successfully serve as the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* of the new community. In poetry, diction, imagination and description of detail, this *Suraj Parkash*, as it is popularly known, sometimes even surpasses its Hindu predecessors<sup>85</sup>. These compositions can provide us the insight to understand the concepts of reason and revelation.

To get in touch with the Maharaja Ranjit Singh's court, East India Company send Dr W.I.M. Gregor to serve the Maharaja. He wrote a book about Sikh history in two volumes<sup>86</sup>. By and by, they started writing about Sikh religion also. Among the writers who wrote such books, the first one is Mr Steinback<sup>87</sup>, who composed a book about Sikh religion. Then from the Western scholars of that period, the important writer is J.D. Cunningham (1812-1851) who wrote '*A History of the Sikhs*'. He tried to understand the spirit of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and he tried to prove that the superiority of Guru Nanak's message fulfilled the historical and social need of that period. But again in spite of all these merits, the book of Cunningham is related with history of the Sikhs and not with theology or philosophy of Sikhism. From the view point of reason and revelation in Sikhism, it seems that this can only present the historical perspective.

## The Western Influences (1857 to 1947 A.D.)

As we have already seen that some European scholars started writing on Sikhism mainly on history. But the main attempt started after 1857's mutiny when the English writers started trying to understand the Sikh religion and their culture. The first attempt was made by a German bishop, Dr Ernest Trumpp (birth 1828 A.D.) on the directions of the then government<sup>88</sup>. He made a partial translation of the *Adi Granth* because he translated some selected *bānīs* in English. He published it in 1877 A.D. In the introduction, he gave

85. Sher Singh, *op.cit.*, p.9.

86. McGregor, W.I., *The History of the Sikhs*.

87. Steinbeck, *The Punjab*.

88. Fauja Singh, ed. *op.cit.*, p.155. (see pages 154 and 166 also).



some critical notes about some Sikh ideals. In the answer of that criticism, Mr Macauliffe started his work about Sikh religion. He rejected Dr Trumpp's notions. Mr Macauliffe tried to be sympathetic and honest while presenting his conclusions. He put them in the light of Sikh scripture and then in the writings of the Sikh scholars<sup>89</sup>. His works are available in six volumes<sup>90</sup>. It can be considered in secondary sources. This has yet to be evaluated from this angle.

The contemporary of these two writers were Mufti Ghulam Sarwar Qureshi and Kanahaya Lal who wrote respectively '*Makhzan-i-Punjab*' and '*Tārikh-i-Punjab*' in 1877 A.D.<sup>91</sup>. Gyani Gyan Singh (1822-1926) wrote in the same period '*Twarikh Guru Khalsa*' and '*Raj Khalsa*' in which he has described in detail Sikh religion and Sikh history. Sayad Muhammad Latif (birth 1847 A.D.) is perhaps the first writer in whose book '*Punjab da Itihas*' one can find the direct Western influence. It was printed in 1891 A.D. and due to this, Latif became famous as a historian of Punjab<sup>92</sup>. Besides this, Gokal Chand Narang (birth 1878 A.D.), Sita Ram Kohli (birth 1889 A.D.) and Indu Bhushan Banerji (1893-1956) have written about Sikh religion and history under the influence of the West.

In the above said books, historical tinge seems dominating but the inspiration behind Sikh history and Sikh spirit are also described. So they are not directly related with the present research.

## Reawakening and Modern Period

The movement of reawakening starts with the writings of Bhai Vir Singh and Professor Puran Singh in the start of twentieth century. Principal Teja Singh, Bhai Jodh Singh and Mohan Singh Diwana made

89. *Ibid*, p.177.

"Macauliffe adopted a style of letting the Sikh founder speak for themselves in the form of quotes from the scripture of miscellaneous quasi-historical documents".

90. Macauliffe, Max Arthur, *The Sikh Religion, Its Gurus, Sacred Writings and Authors*.

91. Fauja Singh, ed. *Historians and Historiography of the Sikhs*, op.cit., p.219.

92. Latif, Syed Mohammad, *History of the Punjab*, (Calcutta, Calcutta Central Press, 1891).

a great contribution to this movement. Mohan Singh Diwana<sup>93</sup> is the first writer who wrote directly about Sikh spiritualism and mysticism. Then Diwan Singh wrote his thesis on Sikh mysticism, a part of which has been published in the form of a book. He got his Ph.D. degree in 1973 A.D. from Punjab University and now has published two books on the said subject<sup>94</sup>. The third book is written by Daljit Singh on the same subject which presents a comparative study on Sikh religion and mysticism<sup>95</sup>. These books can serve as a reference to the concept of reason and revelation.

There are some research papers related with Sikh philosophy and theology and main contributors among them are Gurbachan Singh Talib, Gulwant Singh, Attar Singh, Avtar Singh, Sher Singh and Surinder Singh Kohli.

All this literature will be used for the systematic and serious study of Sikh revelation and reason, so that it can be evaluated and analysed according to the accepted structure of research methodology. All this literature has been accepted as the subject matter in the present thesis for the analytical study of reason and revelation in Sikhism.

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93. Mohan Singh Uberoi, *Sikh Mysticism - The Seven Fold Yoga of Sikhism*.

94. Diwan Singh, *Mysticism of Guru Nanak* (un-published thesis), *Guru Nanak and the Indian Mystical Tradition and What is Mysticism?*, published books.

95. Daljit Singh, *Sikhism - A Comparative Study of Theology and Mysticism*.



**NATURE OF REASON AND  
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TRADITIONS**

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In the first chapter an introduction to the nature of reason and revelation was undertaken. In order to further analyse our problem, Hindu, Christian, and Islamic point of view regarding reason and revelation will be stated in this chapter. This, it is hoped, will provide a comparative study of the background material which may either have some bearing on the development of the Sikh thought or help us in understanding the Sikh view more clearly.

## Hinduism

As mentioned in the earlier chapter, reason and revelation are considered to be the two important areas of human knowledge and both are basic to religion. In Hinduism, both have got an important place. The sources of Hinduism have been accepted as two fold, the *śruti* and the *smṛiti*. The *śruti* (from *śru*, to hear) is the basic testimony and is that knowledge which is heard and passed down by the ancient seers. Under this heading comes the *Vedas* and the *Upaniśads*. The *smṛiti* is the remembered word and the *Puranas*, *Itihasas*, the *Shāstras* and the *Bhagvad Gītā* are considered as the *smṛiti*. The *Vedas* are the primary scriptures and these are considered the highest authority and basic testimony in matters related to religion and philosophy in Hinduism. There is no recorded literature available concerning pre-Vedic period. So the *Vedas* are considered the earliest ever recorded Indo-Aryan literary monuments. According to one interpretation, the primary meaning of the word *Veda* is uncreated knowledge or supra-sensuous wisdom. The secondary reference is to the words in which that knowledge is embodied<sup>1</sup>. But the knowledge

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1. Swami Nikhilananda, *The Upanishads*, (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1963), p.13.



referred to here is not the common knowledge. Here, knowledge means transcendent knowledge or divine knowledge, which the seers realized in the beginning of human life. Manu has called the *Vedas*, 'the all-knowledge (sarvgyanmayi)'<sup>2</sup>.

In the earlier period, the *Vedas* were handed down orally from teacher to disciple (without any change). They were not committed to writing. Once the *Vedas* were systematized the Hindus did not make slightest change even in the pronunciation while passing them from teacher to disciple, and from generation to generation. In the earliest period the word '*Veda*' was used in the meaning of the whole of the *Vedas* in which are included *Veda-Samhitā*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āranyaka* and *Upanishads*. But afterwards, the word '*Veda*' came to be used only for four *Veda-Samhitās* named *rig-veda*, *yajur-veda*, *sama-veda* and *atharva veda*. *Brāhmaṇa*, *Āranyaka* and *Upanishad* ever being the parts of *Vedas* have been accepted as separate from the *Vedas*. This fact has been explained by Sri Sayanacharya in the introduction of *Taittiriya Samhitā*<sup>3</sup>.

There are many versions about the origin of the *Vedas*. According to one version, they are preserved in the mind of *Brahmā*, the creator and at the beginning of each cycle of time, *Brahma* reveals these to seers. This view has been controverted by a scholar and according to him, the inherent contradiction involved in such a theory becomes apparent when we find that the *Brahma* Himself is one of the *Vedic* gods, created by the Indians to explain natural phenomena<sup>4</sup>. The Hindus do not regard the *Vedas* the creation of men rather they are considered the creation of God. That is why they are called *apaurishya*<sup>5</sup>. Again, even this view has been questioned. According to another scholar, the word *puruṣa* is the word of reference to God in the *Vedas* as well as at present. So, *apaurishya* would not only mean impersonal, but also not to be traced to God. If this interpretation is not accepted, then the connotation of the word *purusa* would suffer<sup>6</sup>. The

2. Rajbali Pande, *Hindu Dharam Kosh*, (Lucknow, Uttar Pardesh Hindi Sansthan, Hindi Samiti Parag, 1978), p.596.

3. *Ibid*, p.596.

4. Sarasvati Chennakesavan, *A Critical Study of Hinduism*, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1980), p.8.

5. Rajbali Pande, *op.cit.*, p.518.

6. *Ibid*, p.9.



knowledge of the *Vedas* is considered eternal. It is also called '*sphota*'. It is never destroyed. At the conclusion of the each cycle both the '*sphota*' and the created universe merge in the undifferentiated causal state, and at the beginning of the new cycle the two together again become manifest. It is substantiated as the Lord brings forth the universe with the help of the knowledge of the *Vedas*<sup>7</sup>.

The seers (*rishīs*) are only the visionaries (*drashatā*) of the knowledge. The detail regarding the *Vedas* indicate that they were included in the revealed literature. Whatever the points of criticism may be about their origin and creation, they are considered revelatory and final authority by the six systems of philosophy in India.

## Reason in the Vedas

The main object of Hinduism of the *Vedic* thinking has been to get release from the bondage of the world, the *moksha*. To get *moksha*, one needs the knowledge of the ultimate Reality. To know the ultimate Reality, to realize the *Brahman*, three means of knowing Him or reaching Him are considered possible. These are sense-perception, reason and the *Vedic* testimony. According to Hinduism, there is no contradiction between *śruti* i.e., *Vedic* testimony and sense-perception. One deals with the super sensible, the other with the sensory.

As seen earlier, the *Veda* is considered the basic literature of Hinduism. The *Veda* is *śruti*, the basic testimony. They are considered the uncreated knowledge. It is this knowledge which is revealed at the beginning of every world cycle. The *Veda* contains the super sensuous knowledge. They themselves are among the means (*pramāṇas*) of knowledge. So they are considered above reason. Among the *Veda-samhitā* the major importance is considered of the *Rig-veda* and the *Atharva-veda* because most of the *suktas* found in the *Sama-veda* and the *Yajur-veda* are available in *Rig-veda*. In *Rig-veda* are found the rituals related with the worship of different gods. The *Rig-veda* is mostly concerned with *karam-kāṇḍ*. The *Atharva-veda* which consists of *chhandas* is not related with sacrifices. As a learned scholar remarks that 'the *Atharva-veda* is veritably a store-house of the

7. Swami Nikhilananda, *op.cit.*, p.13,



black-art of ancients....But the general impression which the *Atharva-veda* leaves upon our mind is that of the blood sucking ghoulish demon which saps the fountains of both devotion and reason, and leaves us in the arid wastes of witcheries and incantations'<sup>8</sup>. So it seems difficult to find in the *Veda-Samhitā* the type of reason we are dealing within this thesis. According to Tarapada Chowdhury, in the *Rig-veda* the incidence of human ignorance (1.1645, 10.88.18 etc) and of elusiveness of truth (5.85.8, 10.139.5; of 8.100.3) is frankly admitted. The means of attaining truth appeared to be direct perception with the senses of the mind (1.184.2; 8.25.9; 10.67.2 and 130.6), investigation with the mind, i.e., reasoning (10.81.4; 129.4.5)<sup>9</sup>. Moreover the *Veda Samhitā* is not related with philosophy, it is related with rituals. They are the *karamkāṇḍ* part of Hindu religion. In the *Upaniśads* themselves these rituals and sacrifices are often condemned as useless and meaningless. The *Mundaka Upaniśad*, for example, says, "Truly these sacrifices with their sixteen priests, along with the sacrifices are frail rafts on which this inferior work, removed from understanding, rests. The foolish man who thinks them to be the supreme good falls again and again into the clutches of old age and death"<sup>10</sup>. In the *Chhāndogya Upaniśad* there is a passage which compares the procession of the priests to a procession of dogs, each holding the tail of the other and saying "*Om* let us eat, *Om* let us drink, etc"<sup>11</sup>. It can be concluded that even the revelatory perspective of Hindu literature is doubtful and the type of sensuory context emerges from the above references seem irrelevant to reason also.

## Brāhmanas

According to tradition, they are considered the part of the Vedas. The *Brāhmana* part of the Vedas were separated from the *Samhitā* when Rishi Vyas compiled the Vedas into the written form and divided them for the purpose of the *yajñās*. The *Brāhmana* means the scripture related with the knowledge of the method, in which the *yajñās* are performed. They are second important *granthas* to *Veda-samhitā*.

8 Ranade, R.D., *op.cit.*, p.3.

9 Radhakrishnan, S., ed. History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, Vol. I, (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1952), p.51.

10 Bahadur, K.P., *Upaniśads*, (New Delhi, Heritage, Publishers, reprinted 1979), p.15.

11 Sarasvati Chennakesavan, *op.cit.*, p.27.



performed. They are second important *granthas* to *Veda-samhita*. They are called the *Vedas* in *āpistamb*, *śruti sūtra*, *Bōdhya Dharma Sūtra*, *Bōdhyangraham Sūtra*, *Kōkhik Sutra*. The part of the *Vedas* which, for the different *yajanas*, deals with the use of the *Vedmantras*, their origin, description and in which there is descriptive examples of the *Vedic* traditions are called *Brāhamans*<sup>12</sup>. These subject matter can be divided into four parts, i.e., *vidhū bhāg*, which deals with the methods and contains the rules and regulations for the sacrifices, and reveals the meanings of the *mantras*. The second is *arthvādbhāg*. It deals with the illustration of subjects to enable the seeker to understand the importance of the *yajnas*. Third is the *Upaniśad* part of the *Brāhmanas* which contemplates on the *Brahman tatav*, the essence of the *Brahman*. In the fourth and last *Akhyānbhāg*, there are stories dealing with the description of traditional families of *rishūs*, *achāryās* and kings<sup>13</sup>. In the *Brāhmanas* we find detailed instructions not only about the nature of the procedure for offering sacrifices but also advice what sacrifices are to be performed for different purposes<sup>14</sup>.

The next important Vedic literature is *Upaniśads*. They are very important from the point of view of our study because they are the philosophical part of the *Vedas*. The *Vedic* thought reached its culmination in *Upaniśads* and that is why they are called the *Vedanta*. According to one scholar, the *Vedas* mean books of knowledge, and the word *anta* which forms part of *Vedanta* has two meanings, in the same manner in which the word 'end' has two meanings. It means the final place which is reached as a result of effort and it means the ideas, the goal, towards which all effort is to be oriented. It is more in the latter meaning that the *Upaniśads* have become famous<sup>15</sup>. They are mostly the concluding part of *Āranyakās*. They are meant for the fourth stage of life, the *sanyāsan*, who was to be guided by the wisdom of the *Upaniśads* to contemplate on God. It shows the seeker the way to liberation and the highest good. It is said that there are one thousand one hundred and eighty *Upaniśads* of the four *Vedas* but all of them are not available at present.

12 Rajbali Pande, *op.cit.*, p.461.

13 *Ibid*, p.461.

14 Sarasvati Chennakesavan, *op.cit.*, p.11.

15 *Ibid*, p.26.



The principle *Upanisads* are twelve i.e. *Ishavasya*, *Kena*, *Kathopanishad*, *Prashana*, *Mundak*, *Māndukya*, *Taittiriya*, *Aitereya*, *Chhāndogya*, *Brihadāranyaka*, *Kaushitki* and *Svetāsvatara Upaniśad*<sup>16</sup>. According to one view, "the word *Upaniśad* has been derived from the root *sad*, to which are added two prefixes: *upa* denotes nearness, and *ni* totality. The root *sad* means to loosen, to attain and to annihilate. Thus the etymological meaning of the word is the knowledge, or *Vidyā*, which when received from a competent teacher, loosens totally the bondage of the world, or surely enables the pupil to attain (i.e. to realize) the *Ātman*, or self, or completely destroys ignorance, which is responsible for the deluding appearance of the infinite self as the finite embodied creature"<sup>17</sup>. The word primarily refers to the knowledge but it also means the books which contains that knowledge. In the theological perspective reason is included in the sphere of knowledge because this knowledge helps us to gain the vision of the ultimate Reality. This way the knowledge is revealed at the same time.

The above notion is supported by another scholar who has defined *Upaniśad* as '*Upa + ni + sad + kiva*', which means to sit near the teacher to receive the mystic knowledge<sup>18</sup>. In other words, the *Upaniśads* are that literature in which there is the origin, presentation and analysis of the mystery of life and world. They are called the *Vedānta* being the last part of the *Vedas*, because they propound the subject of the *Brahman*, which is the ultimate aim of the *Vedas*. They are very important source for the study of reason and revelation in Hinduism because on the one side, they are philosophical part of the *Vedas* and on the other side all the six systems of thought in Hindu philosophy consider the *Vedas* and the *Upaniśads* the final authority and take their support in matters of conflicting views.

## Reason and Revelation in the Upaniśads

The subject matter of the *Upaniśads* is the *Brahman*, which is the ultimate Reality or Absolute Truth. This Absolute transcends the

16. Rajbali Pande, *op.cit.*, p.117.

17. Swami Nikhilananda, *op.cit.*, p.23.

18. Rajbali Pande, *op.cit.*, p.117.



space, the time and the causality and cannot be apprehended fully by human thought and reason unaided by revelatory knowledge. According to scholars like Shankarāchārya, the sole purpose of the *Upaniṣads* is to prove the reality of *Brahman* and the phenomenality or unreality of the universe of names and forms, and to establish the absolute oneness of the embodied soul and *Brahman*. This *Vedic* truth is not a product of the human mind and cannot be comprehended by the unaided human intellect<sup>19</sup>.

In the *Upaniṣads* it is stated that the apprehension of the absolute or the highest experience of knowledge is greatly aided by reason. According to a scholar, "the aim of the *Upaniṣads* is not merely to state these eternal truths but to bring them forcefully. They accomplish a perfect fusion of reasoning and intuitive and understanding, which is bold in its flight and grand in its accomplishment"<sup>20</sup>. There he cites an example from *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*. Where a dialogue goes on between one Svetaketu and his father. In this dialogue no dry and complicated reasoning is involved, but common place talk between the enlightened father and son, and the result is the sudden comprehension of a universal truth<sup>21</sup>.

## Lower Knowledge and the Higher Knowledge

In the *Upaniṣads* distinction has been made between the lower and the higher knowledge, *aparā vidyā* and *parā vidyā*. In the *Mundakopaniṣad* distinction has been made between the lower knowledge and the higher knowledge. Both of these kinds of knowledge is required to be known. The lower knowledge includes the knowledge of the *Vedas*, of grammar, of etymology, of metre and of the science of the heaven, and the higher knowledge is that knowledge by which alone the imperishable being reached<sup>22</sup>. This knowledge is concerned with *Brahman* through which he is realized. The same distinction between the way of knowledge and the way of realization is made in a conversation between *Nārada*, the spiritual disciple and

19. Swami Nikhilananda, *op.cit.*, p.25.

20. *Ibid*, *op.cit.*, p.11.

21. *Ibid*, p.12.

22. Ranade, R.D., *op.cit.*, p.240.



Sanat Kumar, the teacher. When *Nārada* goes to his teacher to learn the science of self-realization this distinction is clearly made out between the lower knowledge and the higher knowledge<sup>23</sup>. The knowledge of self-realization has been placed on a very high pedestal. In the *Kenopanishad* it is told that the end of life may be attained through the realization of the self even while the body lasts. Because if self-knowledge does not come while the body lasts, one has to suffer after death<sup>24</sup>. We find the same idea in a slightly different form in the *Kathopanishad*. There it is observed that if a man does not realize his self till his body lasts, he goes from life to life through a series of incarnations<sup>25</sup>.

In the path of self-realization some qualities are required for the spiritual aspirant. The first quality as told in the *Kathopanishad* and *Svetāsvatārōpanishad* is introversion. Introversion means that one should shut his senses from the outside world and look into his own self. He should concentrate on his inner self<sup>26</sup>. The second quality is "catharsis". In the *Kathopanishad* it is told that, "unless a man has stopped from doing wrongs, unless he had entirely composed himself, it may not be possible for him, however highly strong his intellect may be, to reach the self by force of mere intellect"<sup>27</sup>. In the *Mundakopanishad*, the truth, the life of penance, right insight, the life of celibacy are stressed<sup>28</sup>. In the *Īśāvāsyaopanishad* it is told that knowledge is even more dangerous than ignorance. Because those who pursue the path of ignorance go after death to a region of pitchy darkness, while those who are proud of their possession of knowledge go to greater darkness still<sup>29</sup>. Unless the above mentioned conditions are fulfilled, the aspirant after spiritual life may never hope to realize the self.

Along with the above mentioned qualities necessary for a seeker after self realization is that he also needs initiation by a spiritual

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23. *Ibid*, p.240.

24. *Ibid*, p.240.

25. *Ibid*, p.240.

26. *Ibid*, p.241.

27. *Ibid*, p.241.

28. *Ibid*, p.241.

29. *Ibid*, p.241.



teacher. In the *Chhāndogya Upaniśad* it is held that one cannot attain the goal of mystic life on the path of self-realization unless he is initiated by a guru<sup>30</sup>. In the *Kathopaniśad*, the qualities of a spiritual teacher are described as, "unless the spiritual teacher be really of a superior calibre, spiritual knowledge would be hard of attainment, and again, unless the initiation comes from a spiritual teacher who has realized his identity with the self, there can be no knowledge of the subtle path which transcends all power of logic and argumentation."<sup>31</sup> So firstly one can attain this knowledge through his own individual efforts, but for this he needs a spiritual teacher. Secondly, the teacher to whom the seeker goes to seek higher wisdom must have himself realized the ultimate self. The *Upaniśads* seek to reconcile the path of action and the path of knowledge. In *Isopaniśad* it is held that the path of action leads to one result and the path of knowledge leads to another result. But only that person can attain the highest goal who tries to synthesize the claims of knowledge and action. He becomes able by means of action to cross the ocean of death and by means of knowledge he attains the immortality<sup>32</sup>.

T.M.P. Mahadevan has made the observation that, "it is through knowledge of *Brahman* that ignorance is finally overcome. The knowledge that is referred to here is not to be identified with discursive thought or theoretical appreciation of the non-duality of the self. *Brahman* is to be known by being it. The process of realizing *Brahman* is through three stages—*Śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. The first stands for the study of the *Upaniśads* under a proper guide. The second requires an intellectual conviction in what the *Upaniśads* teach, obtained through untiring reflection and logical analysis. The third stage which is continued meditation leads to the final wisdom"<sup>33</sup>.

From the above statements it appears that in the *Upaniśadic* way of realization, although reason itself is not a source of knowledge yet it is not completely eliminated. Here reason is seen as an aid to the spiritual aspirant to understand and reflect on the scriptural knowledge which leads to the ultimate goal. So reason has been given a due place

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p.242.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*, p.242.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p.219.

<sup>33</sup> Radhakrishnan, S., Vol.I, *op.cit.*, p.71.



in the *Upaniṣads*.

As already mentioned the *Vedas*, the *Brāhmanas* and the *Upaniṣads* are considered from time immemorial as *śruti* or revelation. To one scholar the real meaning of revelation seems to be not any external message delivered to man from without, but a divine afflatus springing from within, the result of inspiration through God-intoxication<sup>34</sup>. The said author supports this view from *Brhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* where it is told that all the *Vedas* were breathed forth by great *Primeval Being*; along with history, mythology, sciences, *Upaniṣads*, poetry, aphorisms and all the commentaries. Now none has regarded the histories, the mythologies as '*śruti*' or revelation. So the only meaning, it seems, can be assigned to the above passage is that all these great works, the *Upaniṣads* and the *Vedas* on the one hand and the mythologies and histories on the other, may be regarded as having been due to the inspirational activity of God in the minds of those who composed them<sup>35</sup>. He further sites a second view which implies more or less a human participation in the transmission, if not in the composition of these sacred texts. In the *Īsā* and the *Kenaupaniṣads* the awareness is given of the continuity of philosophical tradition which has come down to the days of *Upaniṣads*. In the *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad*, the same view is referred to that the sages of old were careful to learn spiritual wisdom from their teachers, for fear that when these teachers had departed, there would be nobody living who would tell them what could not be otherwise heard or known<sup>36</sup>. Then there is third view available in *Bṛihadāraṇyaka*, where it is told that all the *Vedas* were produced by the god of death, along with all men and cattle, through his union with his wife speech. According to the scholar, this one is mythological way of thought which is to be found in *Brāhmanas* and some of the *Upaniṣadic* literature also<sup>37</sup>. The first view has been supported by the *Upaniṣads* themselves.

Till now, we have made efforts to study the *śruti* literature which means the revealed literature. This category has been considered

34. Ranade, R.D., *op.cit.*, p.6.

35. *Ibid*, p.7.

36. *Ibid*, p.7.

37. *Ibid*, p.7.



the most important source of knowledge by the Hindus. Then comes the *smṛiti* literature which at the same time is no less important. But it gets support from the *śruti* itself. In *smṛiti* let us discuss the *Bhagvat Gītā* first of all.

## The Gītā or Bhāgvat Gītā

As already explained the sources of Hinduism are considered two fold, the *śruti* and the *smṛiti*. The *śruti* is the basic testimony, under which come the *Vedas*, the *Brāhmanas* and the *Upaniśads*. *Smṛiti* is the remembered word, under which come the *Purānas*, *Itihāsas*, epics and *Śāstras*. Though the *Gītā* is included in *smṛiti* but some scholars are of the view that in spite of this division the *Gītā* belongs to the basic texts of Hinduism.

In the context of reason and revelation, the *Gītā* has got its own place. It can be termed as grand combination of both. The emphasis on action *karma* in the *Gītā* has often inspired some comparison of its message with the teachings of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sikh scripture.

## The Nature of Reason and Revelation in the Gītā

The Central idea of the *Gītā* is the highest truth which is considered to be nearer to Him, to live in Him and to be Him. The whole philosophy is woven around this idea that how to realize this. In other words, it is the *yoga* of God-realization. Now, if a man attains such a condition he should perform his *karma*. The three processes of *karma*, *bhakti* and *gīān* are not separate one but each process implies another and one stage leads to the other.

The reason plays a great role in all these processes because man has to use his mental faculties as well, his *Yoga* implies the *buddhi yoga* also. Concentration and action are to be guided by *buddhī*. Actions should lead towards knowledge. So the man realizes the truth through reason, according to his *buddhī*. And in what way his reason works depends upon the nature of his personality. His *svabhava* is the



in the *Upaniṣads*.

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34. Ranade, R.D., *op.cit.*, p.6.

35. *Ibid*, p.7.

36. *Ibid*, p.7.

37. *Ibid*, p.7.



basis of truth. The *svabhava* is determined by the three *gunas*. In this context, Sri Aurobindo points out, "the reason armed with the intelligence will work in man in whatever manner or measure he may possess these human gifts and it is accordingly right or perverted, clouded or luminous, narrow and small or large and wide like the mind of its possessor. It is the understanding power of his nature, *buddhi*, that chooses the work for him"<sup>38</sup>.

It is the reason of man depending upon his nature which determines right and wrong, *Dharma* and *Adharma* for a man. Man's reason determines the path of his realization. A reason of *satvic* nature leads a man on the right path.

## Revelation in the *Gītā*

We find in the *Gītā* the four-fold conception of revelation. One, God resides in His creation. He is veiled in the manifestation; second, when God-head incarnates into the form of human being. The third is when the seeker ascends to God, experiences His divinity and resides in Him. The fourth is when this experience of divinity of wisdom is conveyed to the world in form of words or language. Now let us study these ideas briefly.

According to the *Gītā*, all existence is the manifestation of God because there is only one reality. Therefore all creation and conscious beings are the part of that manifestation. Regarding this a learned scholar remarks, "the conscious embodied soul is the spark of the divine fire..... The divine also, pouring itself into the forms of the cosmic existence, is revealed ordinarily in an efflorescence of its powers, in energies and magnitudes of its knowledge, love, joy, developed force of being, in degrees and faces of divinity"<sup>39</sup>.

The second is that God descended into the form of Sri Krishna in a mortal frame. He had taken birth into the world to save *dharma*. The *Gītā*'s central idea is that "God descended into a mortal frame as Sri

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38. Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on the Gita*, (Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1980), p.485.

39. *Ibid*, p.11.



Krishna and in the inspired words of the *Gītā*, taught Arjuna to know Him, come to Him, live in Him and be Him"<sup>40</sup>. The Godhead descends into the world as spiritual teacher in the form of Sri Krishna. He chooses Arjuna as His disciple and conveys him the divine message at the time of utmost crisis, in the battlefield of Kurukshetra to save *Dharma* and resist *Adharma*. A learned scholar observes, "there are indeed three things in the *Gītā* which are spiritually significant, almost symbolic, typical of the profoundest relations and problems of the human existence at its roots; they are the divine personality of the Teacher, his characteristic relations with his disciple and the occasion of his teaching"<sup>41</sup>. He further observes that, "when the unborn knows itself and acts in the frame of the mental being and appearance of birth, that is the height of the conditioned manifestations; it is the full and conscious descent of the Godhead, it is the *Avtar*"<sup>42</sup>.

The third idea of revelation is the mystic experience in which the seeker ascends to God and experiences divinity and His nearness. As conveyed by Sri Krishna himself in the *Gītā*, "... For whensoever there is the fading of the *Dharma* and the uprising of unrighteousness, then I loose myself forth into birth. He who knoweth thus in its right principles my divine birth and my divine work, when abandons his body, comes not to rebirth, he comes to Me, O Arjuna ...."<sup>43</sup>. Such a person who ascends into divine, himself does divine works, while living in the world he attains divine knowledge and does selfless actions. Again Sri Krishna Himself conveys, "he who thus knows Me is not bound by his works. So knowing was work done by the men of old who sought liberation; do therefore, thou also, work of that more ancient kind done by ancient man"<sup>44</sup>. Such divinity has been experienced by Arjuna and Vyāsa. As remarked by a scholar, "Vyāsa gradually achieved an all-embracing vision of life as one vast concept of *Dharma* in all its different aspects, such as the strength and weakness of man .... Appearances dissolved before his penetrating gaze, and he realized *Brahman*. Reality, above and beyond what is and

40. Munshi, K.M., *Bhagvad Gita and Modern Life*, p.18.

41. Sri Aurobindo, *op.cit.*, p.10.

42. *Ibid*, p.11.

43. *Ibid*, p.138.

44. *Ibid*, p.139.



what is not: *sat-asat-param*"<sup>45</sup>.

The fourth aspect of revelation is when this divine experience, the divine *Purshotama* descends to the world as human being and when Arjuna ascends to him, is expressed in words, in language. The *Gītā* is such an expression of divine experience which is both sided. About the expression of this experience a learned scholar remarks about Vyāsa Dvaipayana and the writing of the *Gītā*, "as the theme grew upon him, he saw the role and mission of Sri Krishna as God incarnate and gave us a living portrait of Him. In the section called *Bhagvad Gītā*, he also conveyed His message; and he left us in vivid, matchless phrases, the apocalypse in which Arjuna, with wondering awe, beheld in Sri Krishna the omnipotent and heard His mandate"<sup>46</sup>.

## Six Systems of Hindu Philosophy

After the epic period (*Ramayana* and *Mahābhārata*) starts the age which was keenly alive to intellectual interest, a period of immense philosophic activity and many-sided development. As a scholar remarks, "the teachings of the *Vedic* seers and the *Upanisads* were condensed into *sūtras*. Coldly logical and highly devotional systems of thought were promulgated. The *Cārvākas*, the *Buddhists* and the *Jainas* appeared initially as a sort of reaction"<sup>47</sup>. So we see that on the one side grew the atheistic or *nāstika* systems of thought as *Cārvākas*, Buddhism and Jainism who rejected revealed nature and the authority of the *Vedas*. On the other side grew the six *Brāhmanical* systems. While employing logical methods and arriving at truths agreeable to reason, they were yet anxious to preserve continuity with the ancient texts.

The *Vedic* views were systematized in the form of *sūtras*. *Sūtras* are the short aphorism in which the basic tenets of *darśanas* are stated. About the origin of the *sūtras* nothing can be said definitely.

Before discussing the six systems of thought, let us see some common points regarding the reason and revelation in Hinduism as the

45. Munshi, K.M., *op.cit.*, p.12.

46. *Ibid*, p.15.

47. Radhakrishnan, S., *op.cit.*, p.275.



sources of knowledge and their nature. As seen earlier, while discussing the *śruti* part of Hinduism and the *Gītā* the main object of Hinduism or *Vedic* thinking has been to get release from the bondage of the world, the *moksha*. To get *moksha*, one does need the knowledge of the Reality. To know the ultimate Reality, to realize the *Brahman*, three means of knowing Him or reaching Him are considered possible i.e., sense-perception, reason, the *Vedic* testimony. According to Hinduism, there is no contradiction between *śruti*, the *Vedic* testimony and sense-perception, one deals with the suprasensible and the other with the sensible. They are valid in their respective spheres.

Generally there are considered six means or methods of valid knowledge by Hinduism which are perception (*pratyakasha*), inference (*anumāna*), verbal testimony (*śabda* or *agāma*), comparison (*upamāha*), postulation (*arthāpati*) and non-apprehension (*anupalabdhi*). These are called *Pramānas*, the instruments of valid knowledge. *Pramāna* is the special means by which some kind of right knowledge is attained. According to one scholar, "the implication is that each *Pramāna* has a characteristic way of conveying knowledge and presents a distinct type of knowledge; and it is not in the nature of one *Pramāna* to contradict another"<sup>48</sup>.

The first three are the main methods of valid knowledge which are accepted almost by all the *Vedic* schools of Hinduism although everyone has given his own definition. But the *Advaita Vedānta* accepts the six methods as mentioned above. The same scholar remarks that, "as pointed out by Manu, some orthodox thinkers reckon the last three methods of knowledge — comparison, postulation and non-apprehension — with the methods of inference, so they do not mention them separately"<sup>49</sup>. The six methods of knowledge are recognized by other *Vedic* schools in one form or another. "Those which may appear to be excluded by a particular school are usually classified with one or another of those that are admitted by it"<sup>50</sup>.

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48 Swami Satprakāśhānanda, *Methods of Knowledge*, (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1965), p.35.

49 *Ibid*, p.37.

50 *Ibid*, p.39.



In Hinduism reason has not been excluded as a source of knowledge. Knowledge is the most important means to realize Him and reason helps to attain this knowledge. But the highest knowledge is the scriptural knowledge, the *śruti*. So reason should aid to understand *śruti*. "By *tarka*, or rational speculation alone, the self cannot be attained, but by reason guided by the teaching of the *acārya* (precept) and *āgama* (scripture). When reason has *vijnāna* (discrimination, *viveka*) and is aided by a concentrated mind (*yukta, manas*), and is pure, its possessor attains the supreme abode of God .... Though the self is far transcended to reason, it is seen only by the refined (or pure or penetrating) and subtle reason"<sup>51</sup>.

The third important and common factor to be noted is that all the six systems of thought consider the *Vedas* and the *Upaniśads* as the revealed and the final authority.

Now let us discuss the six systems briefly and notice the views about the reason and revelation and their nature.

### (a) Gautama's Nyāya Darshan

According to one scholar, "the beginnings of the Nyaya belong to the pre-Buddhistic period, though a scientific treatment of it was undertaken some time about the period of early Buddhism and the main principles were well established before the three century B.C."<sup>52</sup>

The term *Nyāya*, according to the learned scholar is defined as, by means of which the mind is led to a conclusion. 'Nyāya' becomes equivalent to an argument and the system which treats of arguments more thoroughly than others come to be known as the *Nyāya* system. Arguments are either valid or invalid. The term '*nyāya*' means in popular usage right or just, and so the *Nyāya* becomes the science of right reasoning. 'Nyāya' in the narrow sense stands for syllogistic reasoning, while in the wider sense it signifies the examination of objects by evidence<sup>53</sup>. So *Nyaya sāstra* is a *tarka vidyā* or the science

51. Satchidananda Murty, *The Indian Spirit*, (Waltair, Andhra University Press, 1965), p.154.

52. Radhakrishnan, S., (Vol.II), *op.cit.*, p.86.

53. *Ibid*, p.43.



of debate and discussion, of demonstration or of correct knowledge, *Pramānasāstra*. According to *Nyaya sāstra*, all knowledge implies four conditions i.e., (1) the subject or the *pramātr*, the cognizer or the substantiative ground of the cognitions; (2) the object, or the *prameya* to which the process of condition is directed; (3) the resulting state of cognition, or the *pramiti*; and (4) the means of knowledge or the *pramāna*<sup>54</sup>. Every act of knowing or cognizing whether valid or invalid involves the cognizing subject, a content of which the subject is aware, the relation of knowing between the two. And the fourth is *Pramāna* upon which depends the nature of knowledge whether valid or invalid. According to one scholar, Jayanta holds that, "knowledge is a quality, it is neither an activity nor a relation. He refers to *buddhi* and *upalabdhi* as definitive synonyms of *jñāna*"<sup>55</sup>.

According to *Nyāya* system of thought, the means of proof or *pramāna* of knowledge are said to be four:

### 1. *Pratyakṣa* (perception):

Perception is "that knowledge which arises from the 'contact' of a sense-organ with its object, inexpressible by word, unerring and well defined"<sup>56</sup>. Though originally *pratyakṣa* meant sense-perception only, it soon came to cover all direct immediate apprehension of knowledge whether through the aid of senses or not i.e., intuition also.

### 2. *Anumāna* (Inference):

In *anumāna* which is translated as inference from the knowledge of the sign, we get the knowledge of the object which possesses it. "According to Jayanta, *anumāna* is the instrument of the knowledge of an unperceived *probandum* through the apprehension of a *probans* with five-fold characteristics together with the recollection of the relation of invariable concomitance between the two"<sup>57</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, p.43.

<sup>55</sup> Bijalwan, C.D., *Indian Theory of Knowledge Based upon Jayanta's Nyayamanjari* (New Delhi, Heritage Publishers, 1977), p.65.

<sup>56</sup> Radhakrishnan, S., (Vol.1), *op.cit.*, p.49.

<sup>57</sup> Bijalwan, C.D., *op.cit.*, p.128.



### 3. *Upamāna* (Comparison):

*Upamāna* leads one to the cognition of an object which is not sensed, though it contains sensible property. Hence it is distinct means of knowledge. Perception is not competent to reveal the relation between a name and the object denoted by it<sup>58</sup>.

### 4. *Śabda* (Verbal knowledge):

One of the chief source of knowledge is verbal testimony or *śabda*. *Śabda* is defined as the testimony of reliable authority. According to a scholar, we learn a good deal from popular testimony, historical tradition and scriptural revelation<sup>59</sup>. According to another scholar, "Etymologically *śabda* (*śabdayati*) signifies sound (*dhvani*), literally it stands for, 'word' (*pada*) and epistemologically it refers to a source of knowledge, namely verbal testimony"<sup>60</sup>. According to Gautama, *śabda* is the *upadeśa* (instruction) of an *āpta* (reliable person). According to Vatsyayana, '*āpta*' is a person who has immediate knowledge of *dharma*, who is capable of perceiving objects in their real form and who communicates real knowledge to others out of compassion and he can be a *Rṣi* or an *Ārya* or a *Mleccha*<sup>61</sup>.

## Reason in Nyāya

The *Naiyāyika* holds that all forms of knowledge are comprehended by these four *Pramānas* mentioned above. The *Naiyāyika*, according to one scholar, "can be said to have formulated a logic of discovery. His discoveries lay in a sphere not easily amenable to the canons of cumulative evidence as enshrined in his *Pramāna* doctrine"<sup>62</sup>. It provided to Hindu thought a method of critical investigation which has been accepted by other Hindu systems though with little modifications due to their metaphysical conceptions. The *Nyāya* system has applied the method of common sense and experience to religion and philosophy and has tried to prove and

58. *Ibid*, p.190.

59. Radhakrishnan, S. (Vol..2), *op.cit.*, p.104.

60. Bijalwan, C.D., *op.cit.*, p.214

61. *Ibid*, p.215.

62. Junankar, N.S., Gautama: *The Nyaya Philososophy*, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1978), p.478.



determine the nature and existence of God and the self and world through the *Pramānas* i.e., reason. There is a kind of direct experience, which reveals directly the whole of *Nyāya* system. It is a sort of direct knowledge as visualized in the *Nyāya* theory of perception which is verifiable through *Pramānas*. "This direct acquaintance is the foundation of the fourth *Pramāna*, *śabda*. In the absence of any direct revelation from a divine agency it is difficult to say that *Nyāya* categories require any direct insight or revelation"<sup>63</sup>. "In the realm of *dharma*, the *Nyāya* holds, reason is useful only in protecting the truth, revealed by scripture from heresies, and has no positive role"<sup>64</sup>.

As we have seen, the philosophical part of the *Nyāya* system is based on reasoning. The fourth *Pramāna* of *Nyāya* is the verbal testimony or *śabad*. It is the word or statement of reliable person. The assertions of the sages or *āptas* are concerned with the knowledge of the things in this world as well as with these which are only indirectly known to exist in the other world. The *Veda* is considered such *Pramāna*. The *Vedic* texts are considered the assertions of *purṣaviśeṣa*. "The *Brāhmanas* consist of a command structure and an elaborate technique for its translation into practical action. It is this guaranteed success which makes these *Vedic* texts the *Pramāna* or word"<sup>65</sup>. So though *Nyāya* itself is based on reason not on revelation but it has given place to the *Vedic* revelation and the words of sages and reliable persons. It has accepted the authority of the *Veda* by tracing it to the omniscience of God.

## The Vaiśeṣika System

It is held that the *Vaiśeṣika* system took origin from its hostility to Buddhistic phenomenalism. Though the *Vaiśeṣika* agrees with the Buddhist view of the sources of knowledge, perception and inference, it argues that souls and substances are real and solid facts and cannot be rejected as mere imaginary pictures<sup>66</sup>. The *Nyāya* accepts four *Pramānas* while the *Vaiśeṣika* accepts only two i.e. perception and

63. *Ibid*, p.478.

64. Satchidanand Murty, *Reason and Revelation in Advaita Vedanta*, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1974, p232.

65. *Ibid*, p.158.

66. Radhakrishnan, S. (Vol.2), *op.cit.*, p.176.



inference. Though both the systems agree in their essential principles, such as the nature and qualities of the self and the atomic theory of the universe, yet the classification and characterisation of the categories and the development of the atomic theory give to the *Vaiśeṣika* its distinctive interest and value<sup>67</sup>. According to some scholars, the *Vaiśeṣika* arose about the time of Buddha and Mahāvīra (six-fifth century B.C.)<sup>68</sup>. The *Vaisesika Sūtra* of Kanāda is the first systematic exposition of the *Vaiśeṣika* philosophy.

Some people have treated the *Nyāya* and the *Vaiśeṣika* systems together as there is only a little difference in the logic of both the schools. In the *Vaiśeṣika* system also knowledge, which is the problem of logic, has been divided into *vidyā* or valid and *avidyā* or invalid cognition. The valid knowledge or *vidyā* is the unerring cognition of the object as it really is. It, "includes perception, inference, memory and intuitive experience (*arṣa-jñāna*)", and *avidyā* or non-valid knowledge, "includes doubt, error, indefinite cognition (*anadhyavasāya*) and dream (*svapna*)"<sup>69</sup>

*Pramā* means the true knowledge and a *Pramāṇa* means the unfailing source of such knowledge. The *Vaisesika* system considers perception and inference as the *Pramāṇas* and comparison and testimony are included in inference. Some *Vaiśeṣika* considers memory and verbal testimony as separate *Pramāṇas* also.

It is generally held that the *Vaiśeṣika* system is a logical and realistic one. It has considered the sense-perception and inferential knowledge which is based on logical reasoning very important. But at the same time it considers as revelatory knowledge, the verbal testimony of the *Vedas* and the *Arṣajñāna* also as the most important sources of knowledge.

## Sāmkhya Sūtra

According to Larson, the term, '*Sāmkhya*' appears to be derived

67. *Ibid*, p.177.

68. *Ibid*, p.178.

69. Radhakrishnan, S. (Vol.1), *op.cit.*, p.220.

from the root, *khyā*, together with the prefix, *sam*, meaning 'reckoning', 'summing up', 'numeration', 'calculation', etc.<sup>70</sup> He further quotes Edgerten's views that, "The derivative *Sāmkhya* must be understood as the method based on reason, ratiocination; it is the rationalizing, reflective, speculative, philosophical method. In the translation of the *Gītā*, he has rendered it as 'reason-method'. It seems to him a natural term to describe the method of gaining salvation by 'knowledge' "<sup>71</sup>.

The roots of *Sāmkhya* system are found in the *Upaniśads* and the epics.

## The Reason and Revelation in the *Sāmkhya* System

The classical *Sāmkhya* recognized three *Pramānas* or means of knowledge. They are:

### 1. *Pratyaksa* (perception):

'Perception' according to one scholar, 'is the ascertainment' or 'determination' of various objects by means of the senses. 'Determination' or 'ascertainment' is the function of '*buddhī*'. The two kinds of perception are admitted indeterminate (*nirvikalpaka*), when in the first moment the object is not very clear with its distinctive characteristics. The second is determinate (*sāvikalpaka*) when in the second moment the object is perceived as possessing a definite nature<sup>72</sup>.

### 2. *Anumāna* or Inference:

Inference, according to *Sāmkhya* system is the knowledge which derives from the prior knowledge of the 'characteristic mark' (*linga*), and that in which the mark inheres (*lingi*)<sup>73</sup>.

### 3. *Āptavaçana*

*Āptavaçana* or trustworthy assertion is third source of valid

70. Gerald J. Larson, *Classical Sāmkhya*, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1969), p.1.

71. *Ibid*, p.2,3.

72. Radhakrishnan, S. (Vol.2), *op.cit.*, p.298.

73. Gerald J. Larson, *op.cit.*, p.221.



knowledge. It is believed that reliable authority, according to *Kārika*, is reliable revelation or unimpeachable verbal testimony (*āptaśruti*). According to all commentators, this includes the teaching of the *Vedas* together with the doctrines of revered teachers in the tradition e.g., Kapila, etc.<sup>74</sup> It is further held that, "under the influence of the unseen factor (*adr̥ṣṭa*), the *Veda* came forth from the self-born *Brahmā* (a god, not God); Kapila thinks that the validity of the *Veda* is intrinsic, and self proved"<sup>75</sup>.

The *Sāmkhya* is of the view that reason will have to be employed in finding out whether any system is revealed or not. Aniruddha observes that, "only sayings which are supported by reason should be accepted by me and others like yourself"<sup>76</sup>.

These three means of knowledge are accepted by *Sāmkhya* because any other means of knowledge can be reduced to any one of these three. In the whole system, the *Sāmkhya* bases its conclusions on reason and does not, like some other systems, take the support of revelation for this. Although it does not exclude revelation as a source of knowledge but suggests to apply reason to revelation also.

## The Yoga System of Patanjali

The *Yoga*, according to Patanjali, is a methodical effort to attain perfection, through the control of the different elements of human nature, physical and psychical. The physical body, the active will and the understanding mind are to be brought under control. These are to be employed in the interests of spiritual freedom<sup>77</sup>.

Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtra* is the oldest text of the *Yoga* school. It consists of four parts. In the first part is discussed the nature and aim of *smādhi* or meditative absorption. In the second part the means to attain *smādhipāda* has been explained. The third part concerns with the description of the super normal powers which can be attained through the *Yoga* practices. The fourth book deals with the nature of

74. *Ibid*, p.158.

75. Satchidanand Murty, *op.cit.*, p.221.

76. Radhakrishnan, S. (Vol.2), *op.cit.*, p.302.

77. *Ibid*, p.238.

liberation (*kaivalyapāda*). Patanjali calls his work '*Anuśāṣana*', where the proposition '*anu*' implies that his statement follows a primary revelation and is not itself the first formulation of the system<sup>78</sup>.

## Reason and Revelation in the Yoga System

According to one scholar, Patanjali systematized the conceptions of the *Yoga* and set them forth on the background of the metaphysics of the *Sāṃkhya*, which he assumes with slight variations. According to *Sāṃkhya*, knowledge is the means of liberation and the *Yoga* has insisted upon the methods of concentration and active striving. According to another scholar, "the *Sāṃkhya—Yoga* system, consists of the cultivation of detachment and the practice of meditation, in addition to acquire under proper guidance a knowledge of the ultimate truth and reflecting upon it....."<sup>79</sup>

The *Sāṃkhya* system denies the existence of God but the *Yoga* on the other hand, postulates the existence of God or *Iṣvara* over and above that of *Puruṣa*.

The following three *Pramānas* have been accepted by the *Yoga* as means of knowledge:

### 1. Perception:

The *mahat* of *Sāṃkhya* is called *çitta* in the *Yoga* system. When the *çitta* is affected by some external object, through the sense organs, there is perception<sup>80</sup>.

### 2. Inference:

Inference is the mental modification through which we cognize the generic nature of objects. The perception of one thing leads to the knowledge of another object which are invariably connected to each other<sup>81</sup>.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p.345.

<sup>79</sup> Hiriyana, M., *Essentials of Indian Philosophy*, (Bombay, Blackie Pvt. Ltd., 1973), p.122.

<sup>80</sup> Radhakrishnan, S., (Vol.2), *op.cit.*, p.349.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p.350.



### 3. Verbal Testimony:

The knowledge of an object seen or inferred by a trustworthy person may be communicated to others by means of words. The verbal testimony is the third means of knowledge<sup>82</sup>.

It is observed by a scholar that, "according to the yoga the knowledge which is achieved through perception, inference and scriptural testimony is not enough and absolutely valid. The empirical knowledge is the product of the erroneous confusion between *puruṣa* and *buddhī*. So according to them, the true knowledge of their real nature can be gained only through the practice of the *Yoga*". He further remarks that, "according to Vyāsa, by the scriptures, by inference and by the eager devotion for practice to contemplation, in three ways he furthers his insight and gains the highest *Yoga*"<sup>83</sup>. So we can say that in the *Yoga* system along with perception, inference and scriptural testimony *yogic* insight or intuition is considered the means of knowledge. Through his *yogic* contemplation the knowledge gained through these means is made crystal clear.

The *Sāṃkhya-yoga* system has made use of reasoning very extensively even in matters of transcendence. According to one scholar, there are two types of reasoning. First is syllogistic one. The deduction of the existence of fire from the perception of smoke is an example of it. The second is like the analogical reasoning as dealt within modern works on logic. In Sanskrit, it is described as inference based, not on perception like the previous one, but on what is 'seen from likeness' (*sāmānyatodṛṣṭa*). For example, from the observed fact that an effect like a jar requires for its production a competent agent like the potter, it is concluded that the world, assuming it to be an effect, should also have been brought into existence by a competent being, God. The doctrine appeals to this authority of scripture only where not even this type of inference is possible<sup>84</sup>.

As far as revelation is concerned, the *Yoga* system considers the *Vedas* as the creation of God to give the right knowledge to the people. They are considered the expressions of God's perfect thought, as one

82. *Ibid*, p.350.

83. *Ibid*, p.351.

84. Hiriyana, M., *op.cit.*, p.121.



scholar has remarked that Vyāsa says that God may be conceived as resolving to instruct all living beings in right knowledge and *dharma*; and Vācaspati says that God intended to teach the methods of getting temporal as well as eternal happiness, the *Veda* was composed by God. He also adds that the *Veda* is based on "the perfection of God's thought", for according to Vācaspati, the scriptures are the "expressions of God's perfect thought"<sup>85</sup>.

## Jamini's Pūrva Mimāṃsā

Jamini's Pūrva Mimāṃsā is called Pūrva because it is earlier than the *uttar-mimāṃsā*. It is earlier, not so much in chronological sense but as in logical sense. The central problem of this *mimāṃsā* is ritual and that of *uttar mimāṃsa* is knowledge. The whole of the *Veda*, except *Upaniṣad* deals with the *dharma* or acts of duty, of which the chief are sacrifices<sup>86</sup>. And the aim of the Pūrva Mimāṃsā is to examine the nature of *dharma* or acts of duty. It is also called Karam Mimāṃsā.

## Reason and Revelation in Pūrva Mimāṃsā

Jamini accepts the three *Pramāṇas* only i.e. perception, inference and *śabda* or testimony. Prabhākra adds two more, of *upamāna* (comparison) and *arthāpatti* (implication). To these five *Pramāṇas*, Kumārila adds one more of *anupalabdhi* (non-apprehension)<sup>87</sup>.

### 1. Pratyakṣa or perception

Pratyakṣa or perception is the same as accepted by the *Nyāya* system. It is a cognition produced by the sense object contact i.e. the contact of the self with the mind, of the mind with the sensory organs and of the sensory organs with the object<sup>88</sup>. Perception is of two types. indeterminate or *nir-vikalpaka* and determinate or *sa-vikalpaka*. According to Kumārila, the former is just a mere cognition or

85. Satchidanand Murty, *op.cit.*, p.220.

86. Radhakrishnan, S., (Vol.2), *op.cit.*, p.374.

87. *Ibid*, pp.378-79.

88. Radhakrishnan, S., (Vol.2), *op.cit.*, pp.260 and 381.



awareness of the object. In the determinate perception the generic and specific qualities are distinctly noticed<sup>89</sup>.

## 2. Inference or *anumāna*

According to Sabra, when a certain fixed relation has been known to subsist between two things, so that if we perceive any one of these things we have an idea of the other thing, this latter cognition is called inferential. According to Sabra, it is of two kinds: *Pratyaksatodṛṣṭa*, where the invariable holds between objects which are perceptible, as smoke and fire, and *sāmānyatodṛṣṭa*, where the relation is not apprehended by the senses, but is known only in abstract as in the case of the sun's motion and its changing position in the sky<sup>90</sup>.

## 3. Vedic Testimony

The aim of *Mīmāṃsā* system is to ascertain the nature of *dharma*. The knowledge of the *dharma* is derived only from the *Vedas*. The other *Pramānas* are useful in repudiating wrong views. Verbal cognition is defined as the cognition of something not present to the senses, produced by the knowledge of words<sup>91</sup>. Kumarila accepts *Vedic* and non *Vedic Śabdas* as *Pramānas* under this definition. Prabhakara accepts the *Vedas* only as the valid *śabda-pramāna*. Both Kumarila and Prabhakara accept *Sāstra-Vedas*, *smritis* and *ācāras* as the authority on super normal *dharma*<sup>92</sup>.

The *Vedas* are, according to the *Mīmāṃsā* system, self-revealed. They are not composed by any person, human or divine. They are handed down from generation to generation from teacher to disciple from time immemorial<sup>93</sup>. The *Vedas* are eternal, since the words of which they are composed are eternal. The knowledge contained in the *Vedas* is not historical or factual; only the commandments contained in them are valid and binding on us<sup>94</sup>.

89. *Ibid*, p.381.

90. *Ibid*, p.386.

91. *Ibid*, p.388.

92. *Ibid*, p.262.

93. *Ibid*, p.262.

94. Satchidanand, Murty, *op.cit.*, p.239.

#### 4. *Upamāna* or Comparison

*Upamāna* has been defined as similarity experienced in one object generating a cognition of the same in another having no contact with the senses<sup>95</sup>.

#### 5. *Arthāpatti* or Presumption

This signifies the discovery of a new fact or the postulation of a new truth, as the result of a contradiction between two other truths that are known to be well established. For example, if we know for certain that 'A' is alive but is not in his house, we conclude that he is elsewhere. It is on this *Pramāna* that the *mīmāṃsā* rests its belief in the survival of the self after death<sup>96</sup>.

#### 6. *Anupalabdhi* or non-apprehension

*Anupalabdhi* is the absence of the five other *Pramānas* and it produces a cognition presenting non-existence without any contact with the senses. Prabhākara does not accept non-existence as a separate category. Kumarila accepts non-existence as a separate category cognized by non-apprehension<sup>97</sup>.

We are told that the name '*mīmāṃsā*', given to these two systems means systematic investigation, and shows the important place assigned to reflection. The ultimate appeal in them may not be to reason: but, at the same time, they do not signify a blind reliance on unseen and unsupported authority. They may consequently be taken as rationalistic in practice, though not in theory<sup>98</sup>.

According to another scholar, the path of reason has been set forth by Kumarila in *Mīmāṃsā*. According to Kumarila's suggested path the sense of the *Veda* is to be ascertained only by discussion and reasoning. The meanings with which words has been used, have to be known by experience and with the aid of those who have worked on this problem. Kumarila suggests that the right path can be known only through reasoning based upon scripture and experience. Through reason only the right view can be established<sup>99</sup>.

95. Radhakrishnan, S., *op.cit.*, p.263.

96. Hiriyana, M., *op.cit.*, p.241.

97. Radhakrishnan, S., *op.cit.*, p.264.

98. Hiriyana, M., *op.cit.*, p.129.

99. Satchidanand Murty, *op.cit.*, p.218.



According to *Mīmāṃsā*, there is no contradiction between the *Veda* and perception or inference because the subject matter of the *Veda* is *dharma*, not the existent things. In *Mīmāṃsā*, the function of reason is two fold i.e. first to prove the authority of the *Vedas*. Second is to interpret the *Vedas* consistently.

As seen earlier the *mīmāṃsā* system considered the *Vedas* as revealed. Revelation is the only source of super-sensuous knowledge and the *Vedas* are the embodiment of such knowledge. But the *mīmāṃsā* do not support the theory of seer's insight or yogic intuition. "Knowledge of the past, distant and future objects can be got only through the *Vedas*"<sup>100</sup>.

### Bādarāyana's Vedānta Sūtra:

The *Vedānta* philosophy is important not because of its philosophical value only but also for its great impact upon the religious traditions of Hinduism. It has impressed every Hindu thinker in one way or another. The literal meaning of the term '*Vedānta*' is the end of the *Veda* or the closing chapter of the *Vedas* which are the *Upaniṣads*. The *Upaniṣads* are the essence of the *Vedas*. The *Vedānta Sūtra* is called the *Brāhman Sūtra* because it deals with the doctrine of *Brāhman*. It is also called *Sārīraka Sūtra*, because it deals with the embodiment of the unconditioned self<sup>101</sup>. The *Karam Mīmāṃsā* of Jaimini is an investigation into the duties (*dharma*) prescribed in the *Vedas* and their rewards, the *uttara mīmāṃsā* of Bādarāyana explains the philosophico-theological ideas of the *Upaniṣads*. Both combined form a systematic investigation of the contents of the whole *Veda*.

In *Vedānta Sūtra* the central Reality has been considered the *Brahman*. According to Bādarāyana, the *Veda* is eternal and the *śāstra* is the great authority. According to him the metaphysical truths cannot be discovered through means of *tarka* and reflection<sup>102</sup>. He admits two sources of knowledge i.e. *śruti* and *smṛiti* which he calls *Pratyaksam* (perception), *anumānam* (inference). The *śruti* which is self-evident

100Radhakrishnan, S., (Vol.2), *op.cit.*, p.385.

101*Ibid*, p.430.

102.*Ibid*, p.435.



and revealed is called *Pratyaksam*. *Upaniśads* come under this heading<sup>103</sup>. As in the world of secular knowledge, inference rests on perception, so is *smṛiti* dependent on *śruti*. The *Bhagvad Gītā*, the *Mahābhārata*, the code of Manu comes under *smṛiti*. He does not admit any other *Pramānas*<sup>104</sup>.

We will have a brief discussion of reason and revelation in the *advaitavedānta* of Saṅkara and the theism of Rāmānuja.

## Reason and Revelation in Saṅkara's Advaita Vedānta

Among the interpreters of *Vedānta*, Saṅkara is the most important thinker. His interpretation gave rise to absolutistic non-dualism which is called *advaita vedānta*. According to one scholar, Saṅkara "attempts to build a spiritual view of life on rational foundations. He holds that anyone who adopts any view without full enquiry will miss his aim of beatitude and incur grievous loss"<sup>105</sup>.

Reason has been employed by Saṅkara to understand revelation in the scripture and to know the actual aim and meaning of religious experience which is recorded in the *Upaniśad*. In this context, that according to Saṅkara, "a mere intellectual understanding of reality is not enough. The end of all knowledge is spiritual realization (*anubhavavasānam eva vidyāphalam*). Knowledge and renunciation lead to the experience of self, *svanubhava* or *ātmanubhava*. This is the aim of religion. These experiences are recorded in the *Upaniśad*. Reason is employed for the discovery of the real purport of the *Upaniśads*. Truth cannot contradict reason and experience"<sup>106</sup>.

The *Advaita Vedānta* believes in all the six *pramānas* as mentioned in the previous systems, *Pūrva mīmāṃsā*. The *advaitin's* view of them is almost the same as that of Kumarila<sup>107</sup>. So we need not go into their detail here. The only difference is towards the verbal

103. *Ibid*, p.435.

104. *Ibid*, p.436.

105. Radhakrishnan, S., (trans), *The Brahma Sutra*, (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1960), p.29.

106. *Ibid*, p.30.

107. Hiriyana, M., *op.cit.*, p.168.



testimony, the *Veda*. The *advaita* considers God the author of the *Vedas* because they are repeated by God at the beginning of the next cycle just as it was before. Because the *Veda* disappears at the end of every cycle like other things. But God is not the author of the *Vedas* in the ordinary sense of the word as *Nyāya* system holds. The *Veda*, according to *advaita*, is really independent of God (*apauruṣeya*), in so far as its substance as well as its verbal form is concerned, although its propagation at the beginning of each cycle is due to God<sup>108</sup>.

The goal of human life, according to *advaita* system, is deduced from its explanation of individual self, which is itself *Brahman*. But due to illusion he cannot realize its true nature. For the realization of the self it has recommended three-fold discipline which is set forth in the *Upaniṣads* i.e. *Śaravna*, *Manana* and *Dhyāna*.

(a) *Śaravna* (Formal Study):

It signifies learning from a proper preceptor (guru) that the ultimate teaching of *Advaita* is the sole reality of *Brahman*. The fundamental identity of the individual and the Absolute, is given prominence in the teaching<sup>109</sup>.

(b) *Manana* (Reflection):

Reflection means to assist the disciple in convincing himself, from examples taken from ordinary life, of the correctness of the *advaitic* teaching gained through *śaravna*<sup>110</sup>.

(c) *Dhyāna* (Meditation):

The object of *dhyāna* is to transform into direct experience the immediate knowledge of ultimate Reality acquired by the study of the *Upaniṣads* and by reflection upon their teaching. It is accordingly vision that is sought now, and not mere knowledge<sup>111</sup>.

The place of reason has not been discarded by *advaita vedānta*,

108. *Ibid*, p.169.

109. *Ibid*, pp.171-72.

110. *Ibid*, pp.171-72.

111. *Ibid*, p.172.

as shown by the importance assigned to reflection or *manana*. But the revelation is primary because the truth of the doctrine is to be known through revelation<sup>112</sup>. Thus according to this doctrine, a stage comes when the disciple transcends both reason and revelation and, "rest on direct experience (*anubhava*)"<sup>113</sup>. According to Shankara, perception, reason or *tarka* and *vedic* testimony have their own respective areas of knowledge. One cannot interfere with the other. As one scholar remarks, "He (Samkara) holds that the *vedic* testimony is superior to the evidence of the senses or the conclusions of reason, though, of course, it is useless in the regions open to perception and inference. A hundred text cannot make fire cold. It is the aim of the scriptures to impart such knowledge as cannot be reached through the ordinary means"<sup>114</sup>.

The idea of revelation according to *Advaita Vedānta* is four-fold:

(a) The existent world at large is the manifestation of *Brahman* in different forms and names, from inanimate to animate and highest development as human beings. According to one scholar, "this conception of Samkara implies that *Brahman*, whose nature is consciousness and joy, is manifesting itself in ever-ascending degrees of being, knowledge and bliss, and the highest manifestation of it is the man who knows himself to be identical with *Brahman*"<sup>115</sup>. Shankara calls such human beings *Vibhutas*<sup>116</sup>.

(b) Vedic Revelation: As discussed earlier, according to *Advaita Vedānta* for giving us that knowledge, "which is not possible through perception and inference, *Veda* is promulgated at the beginning of each world cycle by *Īśvara*. This is the main type of revelation accepted by Shankara"<sup>117</sup>.

(c) Revelation through *Avatāra*: Shankara believes in personal God *Nārāyaṇa* and the fact of incarnation. As one scholar observes

112. *Ibid*, p.173.

113. *Ibid*, p.173.

114. Radhakrishnan, S., (Vol..2), *op.cit.*, p.515.

115. Satchidanand Murty, *op.cit.*, p.6.

116. *Ibid*, p.6.

117. *Ibid*, p.7.



according to Shankara, "God created the world, and then taught the two-fold Dharma...in course of time, on account of man's growing sensual desires and waning moral discrimination, God's teaching was forgotten and *dharma* declined. To reveal again the way of salvation and to restore righteousness, Nārāyaṇa, the first creator God, was partially (*amsena*) born as Kṛṣṇa the son of Devakī and Vasudeva"<sup>118</sup>. One of the purposes of incarnation is to reveal the eternal truth contained in the *Vedas*, but has been forgotten. According to Shankara, Kṛṣṇa is omniscient, because he is eternally free and his knowledge is not retarded by any defects and obscurations"<sup>119</sup>.

(d) Revelation in Anubhūti: *Anubhav* is that state of knowledge in which distinction between subject and object does not remain any more and the truth of the Supreme self is realized. According to one scholar, "Shankara admits *arsajñāna* by which Indra and Vasudeva realized identity with Brahman"<sup>120</sup>. This direct experience of *Brahman*, arises from meditation on *Upaniṣads* texts<sup>121</sup>.

After absolutistic non-dualism comes the theistic *Vedānta* whose main exponents are Rāmānuja and Mādhva. Though there are some other important exponents of theistic *Vedānta*, but here, not going into much detail, we will discuss only Rāmānuja and Mādhva. There is an amalgamation of *Vaiṣṇavism* with *Vedānta*. The system propounded by Rāmānuja is also called *Viśiṣṭadvaita*.

Unlike the *Advaita Vedānta*, Rāmānuja admits only three *Pramāṇas* that is perception, inference and verbal testimony<sup>122</sup>. We need not go in detail but a few words regarding the verbal testimony, Rāmānuja accepts both the sections of the *Vedas*, that relating to ritual as well as relating to the *Brahman*, the highest Reality. The two together embody a simple doctrine, the only difference being that while the second part deals principally with the nature of God, the first treats of the modes of worshipping Him<sup>123</sup>. Rāmānuja, places the *purāṇas*, *Āgam Granthas* in the same place as

118. *Ibid*, p.8.

119. *Ibid*, p.8.

120. Radhakrishnan, S., (Vol.2), *op.cit.*, p.511.

121. Satchidanand Murty, *op.cit.*, p.9.

122. Hiriyanna, M., *op.cit.*, p.183.

123. *Ibid*, p.183.



the *Vedas*. But Shankara does not assign them unqualified authority.

According to Rāmānuja, the thought by itself cannot bring the man in direct experience of Reality. Even the *Vedas* provide only the indirect knowledge. He believes in the intuition (*sākṣātkāra*) of Reality.

## The Idea of Revelation

According to Rāmānuja, the world is manifestation of one principle i.e. God. God is the central principle of both the individual soul and the physical world<sup>124</sup>. Rāmānuja identifies the supreme spirit with Visnu.

The second idea of revelation, according to Rāmānuja, is the verbal testimony. The *Vedas* are eternal. *Īśvara* only gives utterance to them at the beginning of every world-cycle. The *smritis* and epics are also authoritatives as they expound the ideas contained in the *Vedas*. The *Pancarātra Āgamas* may also be considered valid, since they owe their origin to the divine Vāsudeva<sup>125</sup>.

The third idea of revelation accepted by Rāmānuja and others in *visistādvaita* is the incarnation of Visnu, the supreme spirit into the world. Rāmānuja holds that God incarnates Himself in His infinite mercy, descending not only with the purpose of relieving the burden of the earth, but also to be accessible to man, even such as we are, so revealing himself to the world as to be visible to the sight of all, and doing such other marvellous deeds as to ravish the hearts and eyes of all beings, high and low<sup>126</sup>.

The fourth idea of revelation is the intuitive experience of *sākṣātkāra* of Reality as told earlier. The *Vedas* till the six philosophical systems has shown some striking features of the whole thought. For example, as far as different means of knowledge, sense, reason, intuition and revelation, concerning their fields of operation are specified, one cannot interfere with the other. So the

124. *Ibid*, pp.177-78.

125. Radhakrishnan, S., *op.cit.*, p.674.

126. *Ibid*, p.689.



knowledge gained through them is valid in their respective areas. The reason is an independent source of knowledge but in its own field. The knowledge concerning supersensuous matters does not fall in the domain of reason. If reason is used in such matters, it is used only to support the scriptural knowledge. So it is subordinated to scriptures. Even the logical systems like *Nyāya* and *Viśeṣika* have used it to refute the views of the opponents and to support the scriptural knowledge, the source of which are the *Vedas*. All the systems have given very high place to revelation, the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads*. Some later theistic systems such as *Advaita Vedānta* and *Dvaita* consider even the *Gītā*, the *Purāṇas*, the *Āgmas* and *Sāstras* as the authority and revealed knowledge along with the *Vedas*, the *Brāhmanas* and *Ārunyakās*. So all have accepted the verbal testimony as the highest source of knowledge concerning the religion and philosophy. Though some of them do not derive their thought directly from the *Vedās* or the *Upaniṣads* as *Nyāya* and *Viśeṣika* systems. Most of the Hindu thought believes in the *Avatārvad* i.e., a God reveals Himself in the form of an incarnation to sustain *dharma*. The object of human life, according to Hinduism, is to get release from the bondage of this world. It can be achieved through the knowledge, mainly the scriptural knowledge. According to some systems, this knowledge can be realized through the means of *bhakti* based on *Upaniṣadic* knowledge as in *Vedānta* school. So along with *yoga* system they believe in intuitive knowledge though they do not agree with the *yogic* conception of intuition. But the way of knowledge based on scriptures is not open for everybody. Only upper castes or *varnas* are eligible for this. So in this way Hindu system of thought is very stagnate, it is not dynamic. Only chosen one can have access to revelatory knowledge. Others are strictly barred from this benefit. So there is no scope for human progress in this system because it is not based on equality though it considers the whole world as manifestation of God. The system as a whole is not only stagnate but selfish also because it deprives the large section of society of self-respect and the achievement of higher knowledge. Only through an appeal of revelation which is contained in the *Vedās* and the *sāstras* they could have compelled the large section of the society to lose human right to knowledge.



## **Reason and Revelation in Christianity**

After studying the nature of reason and revelation in Hinduism, we shall direct our attention to the important Semitic religion of the world, namely Christianity. In Christianity the reason has been considered, with the passing of time, very important source of knowledge. Not only this, it is also considered very necessary rather from the point of view of revelation. Before going into the detail of the nature, and role of reason in Christianity let us see how it has been defined. According to Harris, the perfection of reason seems to consist in two things: (i) In knowledge and wisdom in the understanding faculty. (ii) In rectitude or righteousness in the will<sup>127</sup>. Another scholar, Burnet says that, "By reason, we usually mean a principle of thought, which, accordingly, as it exerts itself differently, is conceived under different names of understanding and will"<sup>128</sup>. Another scholar remarks about reason that, "What our reason approves or condemns .... we are commanded to do or not to do by God himself who give us such a nature"<sup>129</sup>. Thus, in Christianity there are some thinkers who are ardent champions of reason and according to them there is no limit to 'reasoning' capacity. But there are others who doubt even the limited capacity of reason. According to them, there are many things and truths which lie beyond the power of reason. According to another version, "in English the word 'reason' has a large number and a wide variety of senses and uses, related to one another in ways that are often complicated and often not clear. However, there is one particular sense of the word in which it, with its synonyms or analogues in other languages, has figured prominently in philosophical controversy. This is the sense, sometimes distinguished typographically by an initial capital, in which the term is taken to designate a mental faculty or capacity - in which reason might, for example, be regarded as co-ordinate with, but distinguishable from sensation, emotion or will"<sup>130</sup>. According to the same observation, it does not seem possible to give a definite answer to the question 'what is reason'? or 'what

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127. Cragg, G.R., *Reason and Authority in the Eighteenth Century*, (London, Cambridge University Press, 1964), p.47.

128. *Ibid*, p.47.

129. *Ibid*, p.48.

130. Paul Edwards, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, Vol.7, (New York, The Macmillan Company and Free Press), p.83.



reasoning is'? because many meanings have been attached to the term. In any case what is important to the understanding of philosophical writing on this topic is not that one should know what 'reason' means but, rather, that one should discern, so far as possible, what meaning is attached to 'reason' by an author<sup>131</sup>. Here we are concerned with the nature of reason and what role it has played in Christian theology and revelation.

Thomas Aquinas has pointed out that the way of attaining the absolute ultimate truth, which is the foundation of all special truths, is double. According to him, there are revealed truths (such as Trinity) which cannot be proved by philosophy though philosophical concepts can be used to state them. On the other hand, there are philosophical truths which have not been revealed by God. He explains that there is some overlapping regarding the subject-matter. He gives the example of 'God' which is a theme for the theologian and metaphysics proves the existence of God. In the matter of 'sacred doctrine' the theologian starts with God, presupposing His existence as a matter of faith and dealing God's revelation and redemptive activity. On the other hand, the philosopher starts with the objects of sense-perception, the things of this world, and comes to the knowledge of God only in so far as inference will take him<sup>132</sup>. In this way faith supersedes reason but does not destroy it. According to him, the greater light does not destroy the lesser light but increases it. The knowledge gained through reason is brightened by the divine knowledge. They are not contrary to each other also because the divine knowledge or knowledge by faith transcends reason. Each has its proper province and should keep itself confined to its province. Natural reason, if applied unnecessarily to articles of faith which are not the concern of reason can injure faith. If it is not applied in right manner even then it can injure faith. If applied in a proper manner, it defends the articles of faith and can show that they are not contrary to reason<sup>133</sup>. According to Thomas Aquinas, if the moral law depended simply on God's arbitrary choice, it would be known only by revelation. As, however, the divine will for man

131. *Ibid*, p.84.

132. Copleston, F.C., *History of Medieval Philosophy*, (London, 1972), pp.181-82.

133. James Hastings, ed., *The Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, (Vol.1),  
Edinburgh, T.T. Clark), p.657



logically presupposes the idea of human nature, it be known by human reason without any explicit thought of God<sup>134</sup>. So, according to him, human reason helps to understand and defend faith. It helps to know the divine will.

The Christian faith is founded on the *Bible*. It is, therefore, that every true Christian doctrine possible for us to deduce has to be in tune with the scripture. It is held that the *Bible* was written by men. They were not systematic theologians but the men of spiritual devotion and moral obedience. Therefore, the *Bible* needs to be interpreted, that one may verify the historical facts about Christ and understand aright the spiritual and the theological implications of what He was and what He did. The doctrine implicit in scripture requires to be made explicit, and to be focused into carefully framed unambiguous terms<sup>135</sup>. This work of interpreting and safeguarding the scripture is done by the theologians under the guidance of divine reason. "Thus if correct doctrine and morals are to be established from the *Bible* it requires to be interpreted by the Church"<sup>136</sup>.

In modern times, Newton approached the problems of physics with certain presuppositions which he derived from faith. He showed that the universe is an ordered cosmos. In its structure God's creation naturally reflected its divine origin<sup>137</sup>. According to Warburton, "because reason links man with God it provides the means by which we can discover the divine nature, and come to know God as he is"<sup>138</sup>. Reason provides us a rational insight which is the direct awareness of forms and relations in the universe. Reason as a source of knowledge is the discovering of the nature of being which is divine. It make us to understand the universe as a comprehensive whole, as coherent system.

According to Plotinus, "it is the contemplative activity of pure reason that reduces all the variety and multiplicity of the Universe to a

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134. Copleston, F.C., *op.cit.*, p.191.

135. John Lawson, *Comprehensive Handbook of Christian Doctrine*, (New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1967), p.3.

136. *Ibid*, p.3.

137. Cragg, G.R., *op.cit.*, p.17.

138. *Ibid*, p.47.



single inter connected, unified system of types and laws, over which it hovers and broods in self-sustained and motionless meditation, apprehending at a single glance the plan of all time and existence given in its entirety"<sup>139</sup>. So it is possible through reason that we are able to see the world process not as a temporal succession of events but under the aspect of eternity.

According to Christian doctrines, the laws of ethics are revealed by God. Reason provides us the sense to understand them as according to Burnet, "What our reason approves or condemns... we are commanded to do or not to do by God Himself who gave us such a nature"<sup>140</sup>.

There is a long history of the word 'reason' as understood and used in Christianity. It does not fall in the scope of the present research, to study all the aspects of the Christian view in this respect, we shall refer to it very briefly.

After the brief study of the nature and role of reason in Christianity let us come to the idea of revelation in Christianity.

## **Christian Revelation**

The Christian scholars explain revelation from three perspectives, namely in nature, in mystical experience and through events in history. While discussing the concept of revelation in Hinduism, we have seen what is the meaning of revelation in nature and in mystical experience. But the *Biblical* answer to the question of how God makes Himself known is neither of these. The idea of revelation that was virtually an established truth for schools of thought a century ago and that still remains the majority position for it continues both in Roman Catholic and in sections of conservative Protestantism may be called propositional view of revelation.

According to the propositional conception of revelation, a body of religious truths, capable of being expressed in propositions is revealed by God. The knowledge of these truths is necessary for the

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139. Fuller, B.G., *A History of Philosophy*, (New Delhi, Oxford Building, 1955), p.312.

140. Cragg, G.R., *op.cit.*, p.48.



salvation of man and God has made them known in a super natural way. Revelation has been stated in the Catholic Encyclopaedia as, "the communication of some truth by God to rational creature through means which are beyond the ordinary course of nature"<sup>141</sup>.

To understand the full significance of the propositional view of revelation it is needed to understand the three theological categories closely connected with it. The nature of this particular conception of revelation involves the particular nature of faith as a man's response to revelation. The faith was defined by the First Vatican Council (1870) as a supernatural virtue whereby, "with the inspiration and help of God's grace, we believe that what He has revealed is true, not because its intrinsic truth is seen with the natural light of reason, but because of the authority of God who reveals it"<sup>142</sup>.

The second theological category is of the *Bible* and inspiration. The *Bible* has been considered in the Christian thought as the book in which divinely imparted truths are written down for the mankind. The scripture has been regarded as the word of God and is identified with revelation. It has got divine authorship because though human beings have written it but their minds were directed and inspired by the Holy Spirit. The First Vatican Council has said about the Scripture that it is "written as a result of the prompting of the Holy Spirit, they have God for their author"<sup>143</sup>.

And the third category is of the character of theological thinking, as thought that proceeds on the basis of revelation. The structure of theology was established by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century which has held its sway in Christian thought until recently. The primary task of the theologian is to bring the various revealed truths together into a systematic body of doctrine<sup>144</sup>.

## **The 'Heilsgeschichtlich' Conception**

This view which has been widely adopted in the twentieth

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141. Paul Edwards, (Vol.7), *op.cit.*, p.189.

142. *Ibid*, p.189.

143. *Ibid*, p.189.

144. *Ibid*, p.189.



century maintains that revelation consists not in the promulgation of divinely guaranteed truths but in the performance of self revealing divine acts within human history. The locus of revelation is in divinely action towards man<sup>145</sup>. It has come into recent theology as "Salvation History". Revelation understood in this way, pre-supposes faith as its correlate. "The *Bible* is not a collection of divine orders, but a record of the events through which God has revealed Himself to a special group, a record that is by itself beyond that group. It has not been written at the dictation of the Holy Spirit, but has been composed by many different writers at different points within the period of thousand years or so"<sup>146</sup>. Thirdly, religious doctrines are not revealed, but represent human formulations. Being human they are fallible attempts to understand the religious significance and implications of the revelatory events depicted in the scripture.

The Heilsgeschichtlich conception is related with the special revelation. This is the self disclosure of God to man in Christ. The faith that God revealed Himself in person of Jesus to save mankind, came to be born and to live in the fellowship of the disciples. "The stages of the process may be traced out in the titles given to Jesus in the *New Testament*"<sup>147</sup> Jesus is the Name given to the Lord in infancy. The word 'Jesus' means 'Saviour'. It is the English rendering of Greek name. It represents the Hebrew name also which is read in English as 'Joshua'<sup>148</sup>. The *New Testament* word 'Christ' is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew word 'Messiah'. Both words meaning 'The anointed one'<sup>149</sup>. 'The Lord' is the title used in *New Testament* church out of devotion for Christ. The doctrinal conviction of the New Testament Church has also given the title the 'Divine Son'<sup>150</sup>. A son has the same quality of the human nature as the father. To define his divine nature he is said the 'logos' the word of God. "This Greek word was capable of an interesting and subtle variety of meaning. 'Logos' can mean 'reason', the activity of the thinking mind; and also 'a word' ". Reason

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145. *Ibid*, p.190.

146. *Ibid*, p.190.

147. John Lawson, *op.cit.*, p.41.

148. *Ibid*, p.42.

149. *Ibid*, p.42.

150. *Ibid*, p.47.



is a purely spiritual thing, whereas "a word is both spiritual and material, for it is reason expressing itself outwardly by means of a sound and so entering another thinking mind <sup>151</sup>". According to this doctrine, it is considered that the divine reason, who is Creator, united Himself with human nature in the form of Christ who was both spiritual and material. He was both God and Man.

Christ is considered the 'incarnation'. The word is derived from the Latin *carnis* 'flesh' and means becoming flesh. According to this, he is considered the Divine Son who in all eternity is God in the same full sense that the Creator Father and the Holy Spirit are divine. He joined Himself completely and permanently in human nature and lived as a real human <sup>152</sup>. According to the tradition, the divine and human natures in Christ were joined at the Incarnation. He was born of a human virgin woman by the special divine act of the Holy Spirit <sup>153</sup>.

We can say about reason and revelation in Christianity that the reason has been used very widely from time to time in Christianity not only to interpret the scripture, the revelation, to defend faith and construct theology only but it has been asserted many times as an independent authority and source of knowledge. Many times it has rejected the authority of revelation, if not rejected then at least has been critical of them. So it has been giving many dimensions to Christian thought without damaging much the basic postulates or beliefs. That is why Christianity has been dynamic and evolutionary process of thought. As far as revelation is concerned, it does not stick to one strict doctrine. It has also been interpreted differently at different times. But in spite of that the central theme has been the Christ as a 'Holy son' or 'divine Logos' as a special revelation and the *Bible* as the scripture whether as a record of religious truths expressed in divine propositions or as a record of revelation in the form of historical events. Its theory of incarnation is somewhat different from Hinduism as the birth of Christ took place due to the Holy Spirit, not a human father.

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151. *Ibid*, p.48.

152. *Ibid*, p.49.

153. *Ibid*, p.54.



## The Concept of Reason and Revelation in Islam

The views of Islam on the subject of reason and revelation are relevant for our study of the Sikh views on this subject. Islam had come to India a long time before the emergence of Sikhism on the religious scene of this country. Sikhism appears to have interacted with the *Sūfī* tradition in Islam to some extent. Many of the alternative words used by the Gurus for reason and revelation are also close to their similar usage in Islam. We shall, therefore, make a brief reference to the Islamic views in this regard.

According to Islam, "there is no god but God and Muhammad is His prophet"<sup>154</sup>. The fundamental doctrines of Islam are "the unity of Godhead, complete dependence of man on God and the necessity of prophet"<sup>155</sup>. The Mutazilites are known as the rationalists in Islam. "The Mutazila speculations had begun in an atmosphere charged with Greek, Persian and Indian thought and their leaders Muammar (C.A.D. 850) Nazaam (C.A.D. 845) and Abu Hashim (G.A.D. 933) constructed mixed systems"<sup>156</sup>. Islamic theology like other religions was also confronted with the prevalent concepts and dialectic of other major religions. The influence of Greek thought is evident on Islamic philosophy. In general, philosophy and theology are inextricably mingled. Under their influence, the question of free will and pre-destination gradually became important in Islam. It also leads to greater attention to the concept of reason in Islam.

According to a scholar, "the reiterated and unambiguous teaching of the *Koran* on the two orders of revelation—God's power as seen in His creation, and God's will as disclosed to His messengers—opened the way to a rational discussion of religious truths long before the rise of theological controversy. Indeed in respect to some particular matters debated in Muhammad's own time, especially such as the doctrine of the resurrection, the *Koran* itself laid down the method of argument"<sup>157</sup>. So, 'reason' or rational discussion was not new to Islam

154 Antony Flew, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, p.166.

155 Radhakrishnan, S., (Vol.1), *op.cit.*, p.490.

156 *Ibid*, p.493.

157 Arberry, A.J., *Revelation and Reason in Islam*, (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1957), p.14.



It was very old.

The philosophers of Islam, like the theologians, had many examples from the prophet's sayings to justify their intellectual activities. The simplest step they took was to identify wisdom with philosophy. The *Qur'anic* term *hikma* (wisdom) came to be used to signify philosophy and the verbal noun derived from *jadalthum* (dispute with them) was to acquire the technical meaning of 'reasoned' debate<sup>158</sup>. The first thinker which is believed to be a theologian and political activist was Jahm b. Safwan (d. 745), who instigated revolt against the Umayyad dynasty<sup>159</sup>. He is considered to be a microcosm of Greek and Christian influence. He also denied the eternity of heaven and hell. Regarding the influence of Greek thought with special reference to syllogism it "will be readily appreciated that discussion of such theological subjects called for a high degree of sophistication and ability in dialectic. Both were lacking in Muslim thought until introduction of Greek philosophy and the logical tools that came with it, such as the syllogism. An infant theology may thus be said to have provided the impetus for Muslims to study the Greeks"<sup>160</sup>.

The Greek influence created a split among the Muslim thinkers namely the progressive and traditionalists, and such was its impact that both sides were "ultimately obliged to have recourse to weaponry of Greek dialectic. The spirit of free enquiry that accompanied the philosophical awakening obviously constituted a grave fundamental threat to many basic Islamic beliefs. Some groups, like the Mu'tazilah school, which began the process of examining Islamic doctrine in Greek terms, were able to remain, for the most part, within the broad pole of Islam, despite occasional persecution. The Mu'tazilites were not free thinkers, as was claimed in the last century, nor rationalists, as has been claimed in this, but speculative philosophers with fundamental authoritarian instinct"<sup>161</sup>.

The first member of the Mutazilites group was Ibrahim ibn

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158. *Ibid*, p.14.

159. Antony Flew, *op.cit.*, p.167.

160. *Ibid*, p.167.

161. *Ibid*, p.168.



Nazzam. He was an ardent defender of the freedom of will. He sought to explain rationally the revelation<sup>162</sup>. Alkindi who lived some fifty years after Ibrahim ibn Nazzam, attempted harmonizing reason and revelation. According to him, it is possible to work out a valid philosophical theology through human reason. For example, "reason can prove the truth of the theological belief in divine creation out of nothing"<sup>163</sup>. He maintained that the knowledge acquired through inspired prophecy or revelation is superior to the knowledge acquired through philosophical reasoning.

Contrary to Al-Kindi, another rationalist Al-Fārābī held the superiority of philosophy in the field of human knowledge. He has stated that, "philosophers become aware of the truth through strict logical demonstration and their own insight. Non-philosophers can know the truth about reality by means of symbols. Knowledge acquired in this way is inferior to philosophical knowledge; and whereas the latter is the same for all who possess it, symbolic knowledge can take different forms in different societies .... There is no one perfect symbolic expression of truth which is suited to all nations or societies"<sup>164</sup>. Another scholar says that, "he tried to re-interpret the whole of Islam from his own philosophical stand point, using Greek philosophy as a torch which gave new light to every aspect of Islamic life"<sup>165</sup>. As far as prophetic revelation is concerned, Al-Fārābī looked upon this as being impressed upon the prophet's imagination by the separate active intellect, and so as clothing or expressing itself in symbolic form<sup>166</sup>.

This movement of constructing Islamic philosophy was met with some resistance. The leader of this opposite movement was Al-Ghazālī (1058-1111). Al-Ghazālī "demanded an unconditional surrender of reason to faith and a complete submission of philosophy to the truth revealed in the *Koran*"<sup>167</sup>. He was a mystic. It is held that, "unlike the orthodox Christian mystic and more in line with Plotinus, he regarded

162. Fuller, B.G., *op.cit.*, p.383.

163. Copleston, F.C., *op.cit.*, p.107.

164. *Ibid*, p.108.

165. Arberry, A.J., *op.cit.*, p.40.

166. Copleston, F.C., *op.cit.*, p.108.

167. Fuller, B.G., *op.cit.*, p.384.



the final intuition of God, not as something beyond man's native powers and bestowed by divine grace, but as the natural and predictable result of an ascetic discipline open to every man and comparable to the scientific discipline by which the mind reaches intellectual charity"<sup>168</sup>.

This mystical current is known as Sūfism and its source is traced back to Muhammad himself. Al-Ghazālī combined with it theological and philosophical elements and made it a part of the spiritual life in Islam. So mystical intuition was recognized along with reason and revelation "as a channel by which Islamic verities are conveyed to the followers"<sup>169</sup>.

The three distinct lines of speculation arose from the influence of Mutzalites the scholastics, the philosophers and the mystics. All the three, "were concerned with philosophy as instrument or end, and all of them helped in the development of philosophical speculation. Each class produced a number of eminent thinkers. Disagreement among them stimulated discussion and emergence of new schools of thought"<sup>170</sup>.

The major movement which arose in a reaction against the rationalism of Mutzalites was termed as *Kalām*. Its expounders attempted to find a justification for dogma, not through reason alone, which ended in subordinating religion to philosophy, but through religious experience, revelation and faith. They sought to adopt a middle course between traditionalists (*ulma-i-naql*) and rationalists (*ulma-i-aql*)<sup>171</sup>. We shall during the course of the present research refer to the idea of *aql* in Sikhism.

*Mutazilah* movement according to one interpretation is believed to be the liberal wing of Islam, "which was pre-dominantly concerned with the rational indication of God's unity and justice". Saadya was able to blend *Kalām* and rationalism with the ripe wisdom of the Jewish tradition. His philosophy is, therefore, not merely a Jewish

168. *Ibid*, p.384.

169. *Ibid*, p.384.

170. Radhakrishnan, S., (Vol.1), *op.cit.*, p.491.

171. *Ibid*, p.492.



variant of Mutazilites schools<sup>172</sup>. It has a wider and more comprehensive vision. Reason in this context seems to be an integral part of Islamic revelatory pursuits.

Some writers have sought to compare the Christian notion with the Islamic view of revelation. According to a scholar, "In Islam a claim is made for a revelation of the *Koran* similar at first sight to that found in the *Bible*, and Muhammad is regarded by his followers with a veneration greater than that paid by Jews or Christians to any prophet. But he is still the prophet and the revelation is in his message, not in himself; it is therefore still only on the subjective side of the subject-object relation. Moreover, it mainly consists of precepts and the requirement is of obedience to a law, rather than of loyalty and love to a person"<sup>173</sup>. According to another statement, "The *Koran*, accepted as the eternal word of God, contains the whole of God's final revelation to man"<sup>174</sup>. So, the revelation of God to man, according to Islam, is contained in the words<sup>175</sup>. In this way *Quran* is the embodiment of revelation. It is the most sacred because it contains the message of God. So the position of *Quran* was more sacred and high because it contains the direct message of God.

Generally, there are two concepts of revelation which are prevalent, general and special. As far as *Quran* is concerned, both the concepts are found there. In reference to general revelation for example the ever repeated theme is, "the heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork"<sup>176</sup>. The reference to special revelation is found in such words as for example as, "we have revealed to these as we revealed to Noah, and the prophets after him, and we revealed to Abraham, Ismael... He has sent it down with His knowledge; and the angels also bear witness, and God suffices for a witness"<sup>177</sup>.

The Muslim theologians have discussed every possible question

172. *Ibid*, (Vol.2), p.79.

173. Arberry, A.J., *op.cit.*, pp.10-11.

174. *Ibid*, p.11.

175. *Ibid*, p.11.

176. *Ibid*, p.12.

177. *Ibid*, p.12.

related with the eternity of *Quran* and the words in which the speech of God is manifested. It has been established that *Quran* was God's speech and uncreated. It is maintained that when the *Quran* is recited, "the voice is that of the reciter i.e., human but the speech is that of God"<sup>178</sup>. The stand point of one creed, known as *al-fih-al-akbar* (10th century A.D.), which is the stand point of majority orthodox Islam held clearly, "Our pronouncing, writing, and reciting the *Koran* is created, whereas the *Koran* itself is uncreated"<sup>179</sup>.

As we have seen in the above discussion, the reason has been used to interpret the sayings of the *Quran* or the revelation. The Islam is not divorced of reason. Reason has been considered a means to understand revelation and it has given birth to many movements within the Islam which also prepared a way for philosophy.

We may conclude this chapter with the observation that a general and somewhat comparative study of the notion of reason and revelation in Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam has been very fruitful for our understanding of this aspect of the philosophy of religion. We are now in a better position to understand and analyze the Sikh view of reason and revelation in a comparative context. We shall undertake this task in the next chapters.

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178. *Ibid*, p.26.

179. *Ibid*, p.26.



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# 3

## **NATURE OF REASON IN SIKHISM**

**Bādī-Khoji-Soch-Vīchār  
Aql-Siānap—Superstitious Rational**



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The Sikh Gurus have recognized important role of reason in the wordly and the spiritual life of man. A person bereft of reason will be a victim of supersititions and, therefore, not fit to undertake the journey of spiritual realization. The role of *mannan* (*manne* in the *Japuji* of Guru Nanak)<sup>1</sup> is central to the task of spritirual transformation. an irrational person will fall to preceive the coherence of the universe and also fail to comprehened the communicated revelation. The Gurus have, thus, emphasized the need to cultivate reason for the affairs of the world as well as for the spiritual progress.

The founders of the Sikh religion have drawn our attention to the fruitful or perverse application of reason. The former is a character of the true seeker (*khojī*) but the latter signifies a mere polemic (*vādī*) exercise of a fruitless kind. The Gurus have extolled the former and advised the seeker to refrain from the latter. We shall have occasion to know this in the course of the present chapter.

We also come across the use of other words, such as *soch*, *vīchār*, *aql* and *sīānap* for reason or reasoning in the Guru Granth Sahib. Although these words, in a general sense, refer to reason, yet these are occasionally also used to emphasize some particular of it. We shall refer to these words in their proper context.

A rational person has to proceed in his search of truth in the spirit of a *khojī*. We are reminded by the Gurus that a *khojī* may reach the correct conclusion or true knowledge. The *vādī* would merely

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1. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Japji, M.1, p.3.*



waste his time. We shall, therefore, begin our study of reason in Sikhism by determining and analyzing the nature of *khojī* in contra-distinction to the *vādī*. We shall then examine and analyze the other aspects of reason in Sikhism.

One of the important functions of reason is to lead to the knowledge of the truth and to search for it. The Gurus have called it the *khoj* and the person who follow this path is termed as the *khojī*. As opposed to it, a person who seeks to establish his own view astray truth all possible arguments, some of which may even be fallacious, is referred to by the Gurus as the *bādī*. The *Vād* is, therefore, a free use of syllogistic reasoning but its validity may be sometimes vitiated on account of the falsehood of one of the premises. The wrong statement or improper interpretation may be due to a desire to infer a particular conclusion. We shall first examine the defects of a futile *bād*. It will help us to know the pitfalls which the reason must avoid.

The *bād* has both the negative as well as the positive application. The *bād*, as a method of (futile) reasoning, is criticized and rejected by the Gurus. In this respect, the *bād* appears to signify an attempt to establish by reasoning a pre-conceived idea. We are told that in Indian philosophy *vād*, which is also discussion, "proceeds by means of the free use of syllogism and aims at the ascertainment of truth. But it often degenerates into mere wrangling (*jalpa*), which aims at effect or victory and cavil (*vitanda*), which delights in criticism for its own sake. Such a futile discussion can be put an end to by convicting the opponent of his error and forcing him to accept defeat".<sup>2</sup> The *bād* and the *khoj* are the two aspects of the process of seeking the knowledge of the Reality. These are the negative and the positive implications of the seeking of knowledge.

The word *vād*, (often also written as *bād* and similarly *vādī*,

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2. Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian Philosophy*, op.cit., p.115.

written as *bādī* in Punjabi language) is traceable to the word *vād* of the Sanskrit language. Its roots is *vad* + *ghan*. The word means 'to discuss'.<sup>3</sup> Logical reason, is generally classified as deductive and inductive. The deductive reasoning, when mediate, may assume the form of a syllogistic argument. Here the person proceeds from the premises to the conclusion. The premises are the major premise and the minor premise. The major premise is a general proposition. The minor premise refers to the particular instance falling under the general proposition. The two premises, taken together, lead to the conclusion. According, to Guru Nanak, this process of reasoning may assume the form of *vād* (or *bād*).<sup>4</sup> It is wastage and may not lead to any constructive results.<sup>5</sup>

According to the third Guru, Amardas, this type of reasoning is unable to lead a man to any knowledge, though one may claim himself to be a great scholar and interpreter of the scripture.<sup>6</sup> According to him this may lead a person to confusion and not to knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

So the word *bādī* is used for a person indulging in this form of reasoning. The *bādī*, according to Guru Nanak, merely destroys an issue without leading to any fruitful culmination of thought.<sup>8</sup>

3. Vaman Shiv Ram Apte, *Sanskrit Hindi Kosh*, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, third edition, 1973).

4. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.1032.

*Vād vakhanahi tat nā jānai*

5. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1245.

*Sachai sarmai bāhre agai lahajhi nadādi  
aqli eh na ākhīai aqli gvaie bādi.*

6. *Ibid*, M.3, p.27.

*Parhi parhi pandit jotkī vād karahi bīchāru.  
Mati budhi bhavī na bujhi anatar lobh vīkāru.*

7. *Ibid*, M.3, p.1066.

*Ved parhai andin vād smāle*

8. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1255.

*sevā surti rahas gun gavan gurmukhi giān vīchārā  
Khoji upjai bādi binsai*



According to him, a proper seeker of knowledge undertakes reflection (*vichār*) and is led to the real knowledge (*gurmukh gīān bīchārā*), thus, the constructive role of the *khojī* and the destructive engagement of the *badi* is highlighted by Guru Nanak. He has described the *bādī* as a possessor of false knowledge (*mat jhūthe*), the knowledge in this case being of the fallacious nature. The *bādī* is related to *binse*. The root of *binse* is the Sanskrit word *vinash*. This word means destructive, hidden and destroyed.<sup>9</sup> The *bād* also limits the scope of knowledge. Its results are mostly negative. The *bādī* is not an ideal suggested form to a seeker.

In the context of 'reason' in the Sikh religion, the *bādī* and the *khojī* are deeply related with reason. The *bād* is an ego-based, narrow aspect of reason which is subjective.<sup>10</sup> It limits the reason to sensory knowledge only and is non-transcendent and uncreative mental force. It is a misapplication of intellect. The *bādī* is not an ideal form of a seeker. In order to become a true seeker, namely, the *khojī* the negative aspect of the *bādī* is stressed. According to a scholar, the *bād* leads to disintegration.<sup>11</sup> Another scholar has analysed the *bād* as *māyā* and worldliness which deviates man from divinity.<sup>12</sup>

The third Guru, Amardas, considers the *bādī* as an ego-centric.<sup>13</sup>

9. Vāman Shiv Rām Apte, *op.cit*

10. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.1343.  
Jhūthi man kī mat hai kamī bādī bibādu

11. Gopal Singh Dardi, trans., *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, (Chandigarh, The World Sikh University Press, international edition, 1978), p.199.  
"If I keep service of God in my conscious mind"

12. Sahib Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan*, (Raj Publishers Registered, Jullundur), Vol.1, p.144.

13. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.3, p.911  
Kāyā amriti rahi bharpūre paiai sabdi vīchāri.  
Bādī binsahi sewak sevahi gur kai het piāri.

He highlights the creative and fruitful role of the *khojī* in contradistinction to the sterile role of the *bādī*. His sphere of knowledge is based in his desire to dominate and achieve mastery over others through the process of perverse and illegitimate reasoning. Here a scholar has described the *bādī* as a man of strife.<sup>14</sup>

The word *bādī* is not mentioned by the fourth Guru, Ramdas and the fifth Guru, Arjun. though Guru Arjun has mentioned about the *bād* at many place but has used the word *vādī* not *bādī*. While discussing about the *bād* Guru Arjan Dev has held that the *bād* keeps a man away from the real understanding of life. His knowledge is ego-based and is of the animal level.<sup>15</sup> The *bād* leads to delusion.<sup>16</sup> According to Guru Arjan, the *bād* leads to ignorance (*avidyā*). Ignorance has been termed by Guru Arjan as mother-in-law which is the enemy of man and the *vādī* is used for the father-in-law which has been termed the desires of mind,<sup>17</sup> which keeps the man away from knowledge. A scholar has termed the *vādī* as garrulous.<sup>18</sup>

While discussing the views of the various Gurus about the *bādī* it can be said that it has been only used by the first Guru, Nanak Dev and the third Guru, Amardas and it occurred with *binse*. Guru Arjan has used the word *vādī* and *binse* has not been mentioned along with this.

The *bādī* is a person who is also knowledge-oriented, but his knowledge is limited to sense-perception only.<sup>19</sup> So it is limited and

14. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.3, p.870.

15. *Ibid*, M.5, p.809.

Miratu hasai sir ūpre pasūa nahi būjhai.

Bād sād ahankār mahi marārnā nahi sūjhai.

16. *Ibid*, M.5, p.888.

Bharme bhūle bādī ahankārī

17. *Ibid*, M.5, p.963.

Sāsu virāini Nanak jīo sasurā vādī jetho pau pau lūhai.

18. Gopal Singh Dardi, *op.cit.*, p.920.

19. *Ibid*, M.3, p.1091.

Manmukh vāpāre sār na jānini .vādī dharni piār.



narrow. The *bād* is resolved in the *khoj*. when the *bādī* transcends the narrow limits of sensory knowledge he becomes a seeker of truth.

After the study of *Adi Granth* which is called *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, comes *Dasam Granth* which, in the context of this thesis, has been mentioned among the primary sources. In *Dasam Granth* reflection (*bichār*) and non-reflection (*abichār*) are two words which indicate that these are the part and parcel of the total personality of the man. One has to choose between the two and the choice will determine the course of one's thinking. Guru Gobind Singh holds in this context about *bed rīt* and *biprīt*. This difference is in fact a delicate one and this determines the differences between the *khojī* and the *bādī*.<sup>20</sup> Guru accepted that the seeker (*bīdiā ke bichār*) reach at the highest stage of knowledge.<sup>21</sup> It is not certain that every seeker will get this status because in Sikhism it is clearly indicated that man is prone to two opposite positions the *khoj* (*brahamvād*) and the *bād* (*bīdiā ko bikhād*).<sup>22</sup> In order to reach at the level of the *khoj* (*brahamvād*) one has to transcend the level of the *bād*.

Bhai Gurdas has discussed the *khojī* and the *bādī* together. According to him, the *vādī* is talking aimlessly without reaching to any conclusion. He holds that the *vād* is a wasting of energy and vanishing of spirit.<sup>23</sup>

So we can say that the *bād* is expediency, suitability and contrary to it the *khoj* is worthiness. When reason is used to suit one's own ideas it ends in the *bād* and when it is used for higher purpose, to

20. *Shabdarath Dasam Granth*, Vol.1, (Patiala, Punjabi University, 1973), p.17.

Kahūn bichār abichār ko bichārat ho,  
Kahūn bed rīti kahūn ta siu biprīt

21. *Ibid*, p.19.

Bīdiā ke bichār ho, ki advaitavtār ho.

22. *Ibid*, p.19.

Kahūn brahman bād, kahūn bīdiā ko bikhād.

23. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, (Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee, Amritsar, 1981), p.335.

Khojī khojai khoju lai vādī vādu krendarh khujhe.

establish the truth it is worthwhile and results into the *khoj* which is a quest to know the truth. It is seeking of the higher knowledge. Now after discussing defects of the *bād* and the negative role of the *bādī*, let us see the positive aspect of reason in the *khoj* and constructive role of the *khojī* in seeking knowledge.

## The *Khojī*

The word *khojī* has formed from the Sanskrit root *Shodh* (*shudhu+ghan*). The word means purification, cleaning, correction, setting right. And the word *Shodhaka* means purificatory, purifier, corrective. Furthermore, the word *Shodhana*, which in Punjabi language is *khojana*, means, also refining, investigation, examination.<sup>24</sup> As already mentioned, the *bād* and the *khoj* are the two aspects of the process of seeking of knowledge. As is clear from its Sanskrit implication, the word *khoj* is the positive aspect of this seeking. It is an investigation into the truth. So the *khojī* is the seeker of true knowledge. Guru Nanak in *Rāg Malar* has described the *khojī* as a seeker of self-realization (*ātam chīn*).<sup>25</sup> Shankaracharya has referred to self-realizations as '*ātambodh*'.<sup>26</sup> While discussing these two concepts of the *bādī* and the *khojī*, Guru Nanak regards the *khojī* as a creative being (*khojī upjai*). The word *upjai* in Punjabi language is derived from the sanskrit word *upjan* (*up+jan+ach*). The meaning implied in this word is addition, intellect and to grow.<sup>27</sup> Monier Monier Williams gives its meanings as additional, accessory. Discussing it further as adverb '*upa, jayate*' is referred as "to be

24. (a) Monier Monier Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, 1981), 'Shodh'

(b) Vaman Shiv Ram Apte, *op.cit.*, 'Shodh (Shudh+ghan): Shudh Sanskar, sanshodhan, smādhān'

25. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.1255.

*Sevā surti rahas gun gāvā gurmukh gīanu bīchārā,  
Khojī upjai bādī bindai hau bal bal gur kartāra.*

26. Dr. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.206.

27. Vaman Shiv Ram Apte, *op.cit.*, 'upjan'



produced or originated in addition, to be added or put to".<sup>28</sup> In *Mahan Kosh*, *upjai* means to win, to be successful, to regenerate, to recreate, to grow.<sup>29</sup> Having in view all these meanings and its etymological perspective it can be said that *upjai* used in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is closer to the meaning 'to be produced;' or 'to be added'. It may be said that the context of the *khojī* is not individual one. Rather it is a cosmic urge for fulfilment. The seeker has also been described as *Gurmukh* by the *Gurus*. The ideal for the *Gurmukh*, is held to be the seeking of knowledge and reflection (*gīan vichar*). The *khojī* also shares his knowledge with others and thus performs acts of social service. The service in this case is not an externally imposed duty but is rather an outcome of the inward realization and spiritual evolution. The *khojī* is also actively engaged in the fashioning of his insight, concentration (*surat*) through *sabad*. This type of seeking is fruitful. This is rational and proper seeking. A scholar explains '*surat*' as insight, consciousness, understanding and concentration.<sup>30</sup> He further holds that "The attitude of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*'s preaching is this that one should take one's mind away from *Shastras*, intellect should be taken away from argument and *tarka*, should colour one's mind in *sabad* in such a way that the true vision of God becomes clear in one's insight (*surat*)."<sup>31</sup>

The third Guru, Amardas, has not made the direct use of the word *khojī* but he has referred to the word *khojī* in connection with the word *bādi*. According to him, the individual man, through reflection on *sabad*, seek the highest knowledge. This is possible

28. M. M. Williams, *op.cit.*, 'upa jayate'

29. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, *op.cit.*, p.652.

30. Balbir Singh, *Surat-sabad Vichar*, (Patiala, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1972), p.5.

31. *Ibid*, p.7.

because a man has immense potentiality due to the gift of nectar (*amrit*) in him.<sup>32</sup>

The word *khojī* and the concept involved, has also been referred to by the fourth Guru, Ramdas also. He makes it clear that the *khoj* is concerned with the body and mind. This implies that the seeking is related with perception as well as with intellect. In order to signify the human level, the *khoj* is also termed as *bhāl bhlāi*.<sup>33</sup> Guru Ramdas suggests the ideal of the *khoj* as the higher knowledge. *Bhāl bhlāi* suggests that the *khoj* is not limited to an individual pursuit. The seeker tries to seek knowledge not only which individual efforts but takes the help of others also. The mention of *sangat* also suggests that the seeking of higher knowledge is open for everybody. The seeker in Sikhism is not a special category as is the case in Hindu tradition. According to Hindu tradition, the society has been divided into four *varnas* or castes. Only the *Brāhmans*, the upper *varna* have got in the right to seek higher knowledge which is related with religion and ethics.<sup>34</sup>

The concept of the *khojī* has been discussed in detail by the fifth

32. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.3, p.911.  
 kāyā amrit rahī bharpūre paīai sabad vīchāri.  
 jo prabh khojeh soi pāvahi hor phūt mue ahānkārī.  
 bādī binsahi sewak sewahi gur kai bet piāri.

33. *Ibid*, M.4, p.94.  
 Hau manu tanu khojī bhālī bhlāi.  
 Kio piārā prītamū milai meri māi.

34. K.M. Munshi, *op.cit.*, p.54.  
 "Lifelong consecration to self-discipline and learning was the primary duty of a Brahman, and in consequence, such a one was accepted as the acknowledged leader of society and became entitled to be maintained in such security and respect as would enable him to pursue his duties".



Guru, Arjun Dev. He has used the word in two perspectives, one is, found (*ladham*) and the other is destroyed (*ujarh*).<sup>35</sup> Though the word *bādī* is not mentioned here but as seen earlier, one aspect of the *khoj* is the *bād*. Man is prone to be deprived of his real potentialities when he is guided by the limited sensory knowledge only. But if he gets the clarity of this aspect he can seek the higher knowledge. According to Guru Arjan, the clarity which one will be getting is due to the *khoj*. And here the Guru is the *khōjī*. He suggests the way to seek higher knowledge. The Guru is the seeker as well as the guide.

Another medium of seeking knowledge Guru Arjan holds that the saint. Here the true knowledge is termed as jewel. So along with Guru, the saint can also be helpful.<sup>36</sup> Again while talking about the method of seeking knowledge, Guru Arjan holds<sup>37</sup> that only that method is approved which leads towards the true knowledge. And again this method is the saint's method. As already mentioned, seeking of knowledge in Sikhism is not individual act because man is prone to commit a mistake. He is neither complete nor final. So it is collective effort which can bear fruits. He further mentions that every type of seeking does not lead to positive results and is not acceptable. Only that type of *khoj* is acceptable which results in true knowledge. Here man is termed as toy of clay. He cannot do much on his own, so he needs guidance. Here the *khoj* is related with the divine guidance. Here we

35. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.5, p.521.  
Khoji ladhamu khoja chhadia ujarhi.  
Tai sahi diti varhi Nanak khetu na chhijai.

36. *Ibid*, M.5, p.845.  
Bhaiā smārhā hari rattanu visāha rām.  
Khojī khojī ladhā hari santan pāhā rām.

37. *Ibid*, M.5, p.999.  
In bidhi khojī bahu parkārā binu santan nahī pae.

can say the divine reason is the guide for the human seeking of knowledge.<sup>38</sup>

While discussing about the *bādi* we have seen that Guru Gobind Singh, in *Dasam Granth* have also talked about the *khojī* and the *bādi* when he mentions about the *bed rīt* and the *biprīt*. As we have seen that in Sikhism the *khoj* is not favoured as an individualistic effort or action, because man by himself is prone to commit a mistake. Similarly, when 'Guru Gobind Singh avers in the context of the achievement of religious knowledge, talks about *bidia ke bichārī* which is one accepted section of seekers.<sup>39</sup> They are as good as *paunhāris*, *jogīs*, *jatis*, *brahamchārīs* and *nārīshavars* etc. The above categories though apparently seem religious, fall along with the line of the self-centred *bādi*, because they try to achieve the goal through their self effort alone.

Guru Gobind Singh has referred to the context in which the wisdom (*dhrist*) and the foolishness (*bhrishth*) is mentioned. Illusion (*bharam*), enjoyment (*chestā*) and ignorance are foolishness, which culminates in the *bād*. But the seeker can have that consciousness with which *bād* can be transformed into the *khoj*. This is called *achet*

38. *Ibid*, M.5, p.1304.

Anik pūjā mai bahu bidhi khojī sa pūjā jo har bhāvasī.  
Mati ki ihu putrī jorhī kia eh karam kamāvasī.

39. *Dasam Granth*, op.cit., p.19.

Kahun paun hāri kahun bidia ke bichāri.  
Kahun jogī jatī brahamchāri nar kahun nari ho.



*parkāsh* which can be achieved through principles (*nem*) and control (*sanjam*).<sup>40</sup>

Even the revealed books cannot do anything when these become the source of futile discussion. When reasoning leads to feuds it is the *bād* and it becomes a barren process. When reasoning leads to the level of *khoj* it becomes a uniting force rather than dividing one.<sup>41</sup> The first condition, as referred above, is of fluctuating intellect,<sup>42</sup> and the best result of this is that the *khoj* does not culminate into any fruitful combination of thought. Here the *khojī* is termed as the *khujā*. Even devas are considered as the *khojīs* after higher knowledge.<sup>43</sup> The *Khoj* is a medium it is not an end in itself. It is successful only when it is done with concentration on higher truth.<sup>44</sup>

The word *khoj* is used by Bhai Gurdas as verb and noun. Bhai Gurdas's usage of this word is in the sense of simple search or search without an ideal.<sup>45</sup> This perspective is of haphazard wandering which was acceptable among the religious seekers. This perspective of the *khoj* is condemned by Bhai Gurdas. He takes up the *khojī* and the *bādī* together.<sup>46</sup> According to him, the real perspective of the *khoj* is to achieve something and apprehend the knowledge. The *khoj* is an effort for enlightenment.

40. *Ibid*, p.45.

Kahā c 'hrisat ko bhrisat hai? Kahā sakal bisthār.  
Kahā t 'aram ko karam hai? Kaha bharam ko nās.

41. *Ibid*, p.47.

Bed purān kateb kurān, haseb thake kari hāthi na āe.

42. *Ibid*, p.47.

Kāhe ko dolt hai tumrī sudh sundar sri padamāpati lai hai.

43. *Ibid*, p.47.

Khoj thakai sabh hi kujā sur hār pare hari hāth na āvai.

44. *Ibid*, p.47.

Dhīan dharo tis ko man mai jih ko amitoj.....

45. Bhai Gurdas, *op.cit.*, p.226.

Khojī khojani khojī dahi disi dhāvahī.

46. Bhai Gurdas, *op.cit.*, p.335.

Sujhahu sujhani tini loa anhe ghugha sujhu na sujhai.

.....

Khojī khojai khoju lai vādī vādu karendarh khujhai.

So we can say, that according to the above discussion, in Sikhism the seeking of truth and true knowledge which leads to creative results is encouraged as well as appreciated. The search which is static and does not take man out of puzzles is discouraged. Man has got both the potentialities of the *khoj* and the *bād*. If his seeking of knowledge brings positive results, then he enters into *soch* but if he is unable to transcend the level of the *bād*, then he is unable to apprehend the truth and it is harmful.

After discussing the concept of the *khoj* let us take the concept of *soch* in which man enters after the fruitful culmination of thought which is the results of the *khoj*. This is the second stage of reason.

## The Soch

The *soch*, according to *Mahān Kosh* is derived from the Sanskrit word *shucha*. As while it's noun means worry (*chintā*, *fikar*). At the same time Bhai Kahan Singh refers to another word *shauch* of Sanskrit origin from which it is believed that the word *soch* referred in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is derived. In this context it stands for cleanliness.<sup>47</sup> The same view is also found in *Hindu Dharam Kosh* where *shauch* stands for cleanliness. It does not concern with body only but with mind also.<sup>48</sup> One form of *soch*, according to Bhai Kahan Singh (with different spellings) is concentration and thinking. To support this view, *Japuji* is referred to (*sochai soch na hovāi*).<sup>49</sup> All these forms are grammatically nouns and their different context is

47. Kahan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.174.

48. Raj Bali Pande, *op.cit.*, p.635.

49. Kahan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.174.



established. One scholar has also supported its above mentioned meaning of *soch*.<sup>50</sup> Another scholar has referred the word *soch* as reason.<sup>51</sup>

Here we have taken the word *soch* which is referred to in the meaning of thinking. While discussing the *soch*, its two levels can be brought out. Both the levels are deeply concerned with reason. As the reason also operates at the lower and the higher level, so is the case with the *soch*. The *soch* basically concerns with the thinking faculty of man. At the lower level, the *soch* leads to the discovery of new ideas. The second level of the *soch* which is higher one is to understand the truth described by the Guru. It is to apprehend the *sabad* (Reality) through reason.

Here, Guru Nanak, gives the account of apparent material laws and the name (*Nām*), which is in contrast with the previous one. He used two words concentration (*surat*) and reason (*soch*), which according to him, is a godown to treasure the Name of the Lord. He means that the man can apprehend and retain the Name through concentration and reason. This is the real deal which is approved by Guru Nanak. This makes the human life worth living and assures the profit and joy of life. The destination for man is to reach the Lord's

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50. Gopal Singh, trans., *op.cit.*, p.577.

"And let concentration and reason be the godowns and treasures in there the Lord's Name". (*Surat soch kar bhāndsā*).

51. Sohan Singh, *The Seeker's Path*, (Bombay, Orient Longmans, first edition, 1959), p.7.

"We cannot achieve the intuition of the eternal being by reasoning, try as we may to reason it out a hundred thousand times" (*sochai soch na hovai*).

Name and the combination of concentration and reason is the real way to reach that destination.<sup>52</sup>

Guru Arjan terms that man a wise one, who uses reason to apprehend the true Name of God and cherishes with one's body and mind the love of the true emancipator.<sup>53</sup> Reason, according to Guru Arjan, is not a simple mental faculty but a thinking process in the guidance of God. It is there to understand the cause of causes who is doing everything in His own way and blessing the man with His Name. Reason in this blessed perspective is the real one.<sup>54</sup>

The ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur builds the real prespective of reason (*soch*). According to him, the real aim of man's life is to attune one's mind with the Lord's Name. But due to ignorance he wastes away his life and does not try to understand God's way of working. The human body and wordly belongings are perishable in the divine perspective. Man can understand the real perspective with the help of reason only which is termed by Guru Tegh Bahadur as *soch bichāri*.<sup>55</sup>

Bhagat Kabir in *Rāg Āsā* observes the problem of the Hindus and Muslims. By observing different religious ways and customs they have made two paths to one Reality. He advises the man to look into it with the help of reason and he will find that the seeming greater conflicts are apparent one only. Reason can lead a man to understand

52. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.595.

Hānu hatu kari ārjā sachu nānu kari vathu.  
surati soch kari bhāndsāl tisu vichi tis no rakhu.

53. *Ibid*, M.5, p.724.

Mīrā dānāu dil soch. Muhabte mani tani base sachu sachu bandī moch.

54. *Ibid*, p.1209.

Ab kiā sochan soch bisārī.  
Karnā sā soi kari rahīā dehi nām balihārī.

55. *Ibid*, M.9., p.220.

Jo tanu tai apno kari mānio ar sundar greh nārī.  
In mai kachhu tero re nahin dekho soch bichārī.



the true essence of any religion and he will know that God is the creator of everything. Bhagat Kabir takes the example of circumcision in Muslims and questions its validity. It is not willed by God, it is man made. In this way only reason can lead a man to a higher level of knowledge by its process of clarification. In order to make knowledge illuminating, reason is a must.<sup>56</sup>

Again Bhagar Kabir like a crusader reviews the whole traditional context. He holds that a man is a fool if he cannot dwell on the Lord's Name but only studies the religious scripture. Only fools believe that reason is an end in itself. Reason is a medium. It is an assistant along with *bichār* to enlighten one's mind with religious knowledge. It can lead man to the real inspiration of God's Name which is a goal for a man.<sup>57</sup>

## Vichār

*Manan* or *manne* is related with the reason. It is reflection on what one has heard or read from the other sources of knowledge. *Manan* is very important from the point of view that the seeker is not supposed to accept as it is whatever he has received as knowledge. He should apply his own mind to that knowledge. *Manan* helps the seeker to remove his doubts whatever they are before accepting that knowledge. *Manan* is not an independent source of knowledge regarding the highest Truth or Reality but it helps the seeker to reflect upon the knowledge regarding the Highest Truth to make it crystal clear. As described in the *Vedānta* system of Indian Philosophy, "This idea that the oneness of *Brahman* and *Śiva* is impossible is removed by pondering over (*vicāra*) the Upaniśadic statements. This is *manana*

56. *Ibid*, Kabir ji, p.477.

Hindū turak kahā te āe kini eh rāh chalāi.

Dil mahi sochi bichāri kavāde bhisat dojak kini pāi.

57. *Ibid*, Kabir ji, p.655.

Kia parhīai kiā gumāi, kiā bed purāna sunīai.

Parhe sune kiā hoī. jau sahaj an milio soī.



or meditation on scriptural statements".<sup>58</sup> So here *manan* is related with (*vīchār*) i.e., pondering on the *Upanisadic* teachings or revelation. Similarly, in Sikhism, *manan* is related with the reflection on revealed knowledge. The revealed knowledge becomes the part of the seeker's personality through pondering on *sabad* and what he hears from the Guru. Any knowledge, even if it be revealed one, does not become the part of the human personality unless one reflects upon it. Without *manan* one cannot attain its true meaning. As held by one scholar of Sikhism, "through reflection the awareness of the mind and the intellect are sharpened".<sup>59</sup> The above mentioned state of mind and intellect are necessary for the understanding of the revelation. However, we shall refer to *manan* as reflection in the next chapter in detail.

In Sikhism like *Advaita Vedānta*, *manan* is related with *vīchār*. It is not only that *manan* has been related with *vīchār* in *Advaita Vedānta* but *manan* is further related with *tarka* in *Advaita Vedānta*. As stated by a scholar, "Sankara explains that hearing (*śravaṇa*) is receiving instructions from one's teacher and from scriptures; meditation (*manan*) is discussion through reasoning (*tarka*)."<sup>60</sup> So here *manan* thinkers of Shankara's school have stated that *vīchār* is *tarka*. As stated at the same place mentioned above, "According to Suresvara and Madhusudana Sarasvati hearing of the *Mahāvākyas* is the principle means of Brahman-realization, but such 'hearing' has to be aided (*sahita*) by *manan* and *nididhyāsāna*. Madhūsūdana says that "pondering over the *Upanisad vākyas* (*vedānta vicāra*) is nothing but *śravaṇa* aided by *manan* and *nididhyāsāna* and such a *śravaṇa* is of the nature of *anvaya-vyatireka tarka*."<sup>61</sup> So it is clear from the above discussion that *śravaṇa*, *manan*, *nididhyāsāna*, *vīchār* and *tarka* etc. are all inter-related. They point out the same thing that is discussion through reasoning. So they are reason.

In *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* we do not find the word *tarka* directly

58. K. Satchidanand Murty, *Revelation and Reason in Advaita Vedānta*, op.cit., p.149.

59. Avtar Singh, op.cit., p.90.

60. K. Satchidananda Murty, op.cit., p.152.

61. *Ibid*, p.152.



in the context of reason as in *Advaita Vedānta* but we have the three fold way of *sravana*, *manan* and *nidhidhyāsāna* which is called *sunniāi*, *manne* and *dhyan* in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in this form. *Vīchār* is a Sanskrit word. It is *vi+car+ghan*.<sup>62</sup> The meaning implied by the word are pondering, deliberation, examination, reflection, investigation, knowing how to discriminate and judge, logical disputation.<sup>63</sup> It has been used in different forms as *vīchār*, *vichār*, *bīchār* and *bichār* etc. in Sikhism but there is no difference of meaning with different forms. The term has been used in almost the same sense as in *Advaita Vedānta*. In Sikhism also, it is held that to achieve the goal of his life, i.e., to realize the essence of his self, the seeker needs the *vīchār* or logical discussion on the *śabad* or *Gur-sabad*. The understanding of the *śabad* is possible through reason or *vīchār*. *Vichar* is needed to achieve the ultimate understanding of the revelation. It is through *vīchār* that the seeker is able to discriminate, to investigate, to judge.

According to Guru Nanak, only that seeker gathers the profit who investigates the jewel of God's Name through *vichāri* (reason). The Guru asks the seeker to reason upon God's name through *vīchār*.<sup>64</sup> *Haumai* is ignorance, according to Sikhism, Guru Nanak holds that this ignorance is removed through the *vīchār* on *śabad*.<sup>65</sup>

The ideal for the seeker, according to Sikhism, is to merge in the

62. Vaman Shiv Rām Apte, *op.cit.*, 'vīchār'

63. Monier Monier Williams, *op.cit.*, *vīchār*, p.958.

64. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.56.

*lāhā ahinisi nautanā parkhe ratanu vichāri.*

*Vanjariā siu vanaju kari gurmukhi brahamu bīchāri.*

65. *Ibid*, M.1, p.139.

*Nā hau nā mai nā hau hova Nānak sabadu vīchāri.*

Truth. Guru Nanak holds that *sabad* is the medium to attain that goal. This goal is achieved through the *vīchār* on *śabad*.<sup>66</sup> He further asks a *yogi* to reflect on the Guru's word. Through this process he will learn to look upon pain and pleasures, sorrow and separation alike. He can feed himself on the Lord's Name only through *vīchār* on the Guru's word. It means the self-control for which the *yogis* perform austerities cannot be attained without the *vīchār* on Guru's word.<sup>67</sup>

Guru Nanak avers that the wordly attachment is unclean. The truth is immaculate thing which is to be attained through reason and *vīchār* on Guru's word. But such people are rare who attain that knowledge of God.<sup>68</sup>

According to Guru Amardas, the *haumai* which is ignorances and keeps the mind unclean is removed when man gets rid of the sense of I-ness and dies of the desires of the world through *vīchār* on Guru's *śabad*.<sup>69</sup> This idea is further confirmed by the Guru that when man removes his *haumai* through reasoning on the Guru's word, he drinks the nectar of the Name of God. So man is advised to read and dwell upon God through the *vīchār* on the Guru's word. It is the only right

66. *Ibid*, M.1, p.144.

Sachu terā darbāru sabad nisānia.

Sachā sabadu vīchārī sachī samānia.

67. *Ibid*, M.1, p.879.

Gur kā sabadu vīchārī jogī.

Dukhu sukhu sam karnā sog blogī.

Bhugati nāmū gur sabadi vīchārī.

68. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1331.

Jagu khoto sachu nirmalo gur sabadi vīchārī.

Te nar virle jāniāhi jin antari gīanu murārī.

69. *Ibid*, M.3, p.34.

āpu chhodi jivat marai gur kai sabadi vīchār.



medium to reach the truth.<sup>70</sup> He further holds that this body which contains the treasures of God's name is to be discipline through the *vīchar* on Guru's word to realize that treasure.<sup>71</sup>

Guru Amardas further holds in *Rāg Sorath* that three things have been placed by God in human mind i.e. truth, contentment and reason as further explained by Guru Arjan in *Mundāvini*. This has been called the ambrosia, the food of the gods, the essence of all food. While tasting it mind is satiated and achieves the emancipation. But it is difficult to find it out otherwise, it is possible only through the *vīchār* on Guru's word.<sup>72</sup> It is clear from this that how much importance has been attached by the Gurus to reason (*vīchār*). This is the potent means to attain the essence of knowledge.

*Haumai* and *māyā* which are considered ignorance in Sikhism, are termed as poison by Guru Ramdas. Those absorbed in them are the loser and opposite to them is the Name of God which is a profit. This profit is gained through the *vīchār* on Guru's word.<sup>73</sup> The Guru further says that the *manmukhs* who go according to their own mind incur the

70. *Ibid*, M.3., p.424.

amritu mūthā sabadu vīchāri  
andinu bhoge hāumai māri.

71. *Ibid*, M.3, p.427.

Ihu manu dehī sodhi tu gur sabadi vīchāri.

72. *Ibid*, M.3, p.645.

thālai vich trai vasatū paio har bhojan amrit sārū.  
ihu bhojanu alabh hai santahu labhai gur vīchāri.

73. *Ibid*, M.4, p.300.

lāhā hari dhani khatīā gurmukhi sabadu vīchāri.

immense debt of vices and it is removed only through the reason and *śabad*.<sup>74</sup>

According to Guru Arjan, through reason or *vīchār* on the Guru's word man attains the state of bliss, because through *vīchār* on Guru's word,<sup>75</sup> all adversaries are removed, and man is imbued in the higher knowledge. As mentioned earlier, Guru Arjan has elaborated the idea given by Guru Amardas. Guru Arjan has mentioned in *Mundāvini* at the end of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* that three things—truth, contentment and reason—have been placed in the salver (the Granth). Along with them is placed the Name of God also. He, who tastes these things is fulfilled.<sup>76</sup>

The view of *vīchār* held by the Gurus has been supported by Bhai Gurdas. According to him, the *Gurmukh* knows the truth through *vīchār* on the *śabad*.<sup>77</sup> He further says that *Gurmukhs* tell the *śabad* and *sākhī* to the Sikhs, thus the persons who have attained the knowledge through the Guru lead the seekers on the right path. The *Gurmukhs* have earned the truth through the *vīchār* on *śabad*.<sup>78</sup> He is of the opinion that the *Gurmukhs* have done the *vīchār* on the meaning of the *sabad* and then explain it to others.<sup>79</sup> He further holds that a seeker attains knowledge through reason on the *śabad* of *satguru*.<sup>80</sup>

74. *Ibid*, M.4, p.981.

Manmukh karaju charhiā bikhu bhārī utarai sabadu vīchare.

75. *Ibid*, M.5, p.370.

Mahā anandu gur sabadu vīchāri.

Pria siu rāti dhan suhāgani nāri.

76. *Ibid*, M.5, p.1429.

Thālu vich tini vasatu paio satu santokhu vīchāro.

77. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, 19/4, p.205.

Gurmukhi sabadu vīchāri sachi sijānīai.

78. *Ibid*, 19/2, p.209.

Gurmukhi sākhī sabadi sikhi sunāia.

Gurmukhi sabad vīchāri sachi kamāia.

79. *Ibid*, 19/3, p.209.

Gurmukh arathu vīchāri sabadu vīkhānia.

80. *Ibid*, 20/14, p.218.

Satigur sabadu vichāri giānu kamāia.



So we have seen that reason has been given a great importance in Sikhism like *Advaita Vedānta*. It is necessary for understanding of revelation.

## Aql

The word *aql* has been used in two senses in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. The sense in which the word *aql* is used in different contexts is largely determined by the language from which it is derived. It is traceable both to the Arabic as well as to the Sanskrit language but it is differently understood in the two languages. In the Sanskrit language, its root is  $\bar{A}+Kl$ . When used in the terms of Sanskrit language the word implies many meanings such as indivisible, perfect whole, attributeless.<sup>81</sup> In *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the word *akal* is used in many forms. We, however, find that *akal* is mostly used in conjunction with 'gat' or 'kalā'. when used as '*akalgati*' or '*akalkalā*' it stands for one of the meanings similar to the use of '*akal*' in Sanskrit. The other usage of the word is derived from the Arabic language, wherein the word *aql* is used for reason.<sup>82</sup>

In the present thesis, we shall mostly use the word *aql* in terms of its origin in the Arabic language, although we shall not overlook the meaning in which it has been used in the Sanskrit language.

According to Guru Nanak, reason may perform many functions. One of its major functions may be in terms of its use in confirming or

81. Balbir Singh, *Nirukt, Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, (Patiala, Punjabi University, Vol.1, 1972), p.367.

82. a) F. Steingrass, *A Persian-English Dictionary*, (New Delhi, Oriental Books Reprint Corporation), 'Aql' 'reason'.

b) S. Haim, *The Larger English-Persian Dictionary*, (Teheran, Librarie-Imprimerie Beroukhim, Vol.II, 1960), 'reason' (ree'zn), aql (aqhal).

contradicting empirical and sensory knowledge. In this sense, Guru Nanak has used the word 'gālub-i-aql'.<sup>83</sup> Similar to the grammatical theory called *vilop vianjna* theory according to which the first word is vanished, for example, 'asthān' becomes 'thān', a theory is applied in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* also. The word, 'gālub' is from Arabic language and originally it is 'maglūb', when its first syllable is dropped it becomes gālub. The meaning of which is distorting intellect.

The man who is devoid of *aql* is termed as blind as self-willed by the Guru. Such a person cannot attain the higher knowledge of the *sabad* and cannot understand the essence of human birth.<sup>84</sup>

According to Guru Nanak, that reason which does not result in fruitful culmination of thought and leads to fertile discussion (*bād*) only, should not be followed. According to the Guru, one aspect of reason is to help in right understanding of revelation. It is the function of reason to evaluate and correctly apprehend the given knowledge. It also helps to share this knowledge with others.<sup>85</sup> As mentioned earlier, Guru Nanak has termed the man without reason as mentally blind because he is unable to apprehend the truth. It is possible through reason only to discriminate between right and wrong knowledge.<sup>86</sup> In *Var Sūhī*, the above notion is supported, and a person devoid of reason

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83. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.1291.  
Chilmili bisīar duniā fani qalūbi aql mānī gor na mānī.
84. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1126.  
Behare kam aql bhāi hochhī sabad sahaj nahī bājhiā.
85. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1245.  
aqlī parhī kai bujhīai aqlī kīchai dānu
86. *Ibid*, M.1, p.229.  
andhe aqlī bāhre kiā tin siu kahīai.



is termed as a fool whose knowledge is blind and cannot know the things in their right perspective.<sup>87</sup>

Guru Nanak believes that man is capable of becoming *aqlsar* and this he can achieve with the help of reason in spite of his sensory limitations. A man devoid of reason is blind in mind's eye and cannot understand the actual objective of life. But a man with reason can understand and realize. With this he is wise and beautiful. It is said that for healthy sensory knowledge one should sharpen one's consciousness (*sudh*) and intellect (*budh*) which is possible through reason (*aql*) only.<sup>88</sup> A person without *aql* is an animal (a beast), according to Guru Nanak.

The Sikh perspective of reason is that which is achieved through the Grace of God and it is evolved one. Through the Grace of God, mind turns away from the sensory knowledge towards inner side and seeks the higher knowledge which is possible through detachedness.<sup>89</sup>

Baba Farid holds that the man with reason is one who does not do any wrong. Sheikh Farid is of the view that inconsistency in one's judgement is symptomatic of irrationality.<sup>90</sup>

Bhai Gurdas, an interpreter of Sikhism holds rationality to be the distinguishing mark of a man. According to him, a being devoid of

87. *Ibid*, M.1, p.789.

andhe aqli bāhre mūrakh andh giānu.

Nānak nadari bāhre kabahi na pāvahi mānu.

88. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1246.

iknā nād na bed na giā rasu ras kas na jānanti.

ikna sudhi na budhi na aqlsar akhar ka bhiu na lahanti.

89. *Ibid*, Kabir, p.333.

mere man man hī ulati samānā.

gurparsadi aqli bhai avarai nataru tha begana.

90. *Ibid*, Farid, p.1378.

Faridā je tū aqli latīf kāle likhu na lekhu.

reason, is an animal.<sup>91</sup> It indicates the high esteem in which the use of reason is held in Sikhism.

It is interesting to note that Guru Nanak Dev, Bhagat Kabir, Baba Farid and Bhai Gurdas have used the word *aql* which has its origin in Arabic language along with its origin in Sanskrit language also. Guru Arjan Dev have used the word *aql* only which has its origin in Sanskrit language.

So it can be said that reason has been provided a very high place in Sikh thought. It is the function of reason to discriminate between right and wrong. To know better, man should understand the things around him, in their proper perspective which is possible through reason only. The main function of reason is to make one understand, the religious knowledge, to apprehend it properly, to evaluate it and then to share this knowledge with others and then to serve others with this knowledge. It is the function of reason to confirm or contradict empirical and sensory knowledge. Through reason man rises above the animal level and becomes wise.

## The Sīānap

After discussing the *aql*, we are dealing with the *sīānap* which is the higher stage of reason acquired along with *vīchār*, *soch* and *aql*. According to *Mahān Kosh*, the word *sīānap* is a noun and the meanings implied in it are accomplishment, virtuous, elegance and the *sīānā* is an adjective of the same and the meaning of this is a man of knowledge, intelligent and wise. Again, according to *Mahān Kosh*, the word *sīānā* has been derived from the '*shāan*' an Arabic word. In Arabic, it means a man of deeper insight and of broader vision.<sup>92</sup> So the *sīānā* is a man who uses his reason (*soch*, *vīchār*, and *aql*) to

91. Bhai Gurdas, *op.cit.*, 32/17, p.350.

Mūrakhu aqlī bāhrā vānsahu mul na hovī gannā.  
mānus dehi pasū upannā.

92. *Mahan Kosh*, *op.cit.*, p.142.



understand the things in their proper perspective. The *sīanā* uses his reason on two levels. On one level he tries to understand the world around him, which is related with cause and effect. He understands it through reason. In this way, what he aims at, can make him worldly wise. His *sīanap* here relates to immediate gains. Another level of *sīanā* is that who understands the Truth as expressed by Guru in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, through his *vīchār*. He applies his reason to apprehend the higher Truth. Though this form of reason is applied one but in spirit it is related with revelation. This is the higher level of *sīanap*. We are concerned here with this second stage.

The first Guru, Nanak while talking about the stage of life observes that man's reason works in two ways. When it is guided by immediate gain man commits wrong and his intellect deserts him and his wisdom is departed. Repentance for this is must for the involved one. But if he follows Guru's instructions along with his reason and *vīchār*, he gains wisdom. This is termed as *liv*. Here Guru instructs the man in clear words, "fix your mind on the Lord and remember Him". This perspective is not abstract one but reason here is related with revelation.<sup>93</sup> Guru further talks about the first category and questions even the service, the goodness and the wisdom which does not accord with the higher reason. Only that service, goodness and *sīanap* are worthwhile which leads to the apprehension of Lord's Name. Only the Name of God can snap the bonds.<sup>94</sup> Only the Name, according to Guru Nanak, realized reason or wisdom is the only medium through which God's will can be lived and realized. The reason, which leads to any wisdom other than this is a wastage.<sup>95</sup>

93. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.76.

Budhi visarajī gāi sīanap kari avgan pachhutāe.

Kahu Nānak parāni tījai paharai prabhu chetahu liv lae.

94. *Ibid*, M.1, p.729.

Chakānā changiāi avar sīanap kitu.

Nānak namu samali tū badha chhutahi jitu.

95. *Ibid*, M.1, p.991.

Tau devānā janīai jā ekā kār kamāi.

Hukamānai khasam ka dūjī avar sīanap kī.

Guru Ram Das here connects the *sīanap* with *vīchār*. When one acquires wisdom through the *vīchār* (reflection), he comes to know that man is to follow the word of Guru and in this way he gets emancipated. Mediator in person is ruled out because a person can try to mislead the fellow-beings. *Gurbānī* crystalises such situations. The main theme is that he who follows the way of the Guru's word, even the *Yama*, the tax gatherer does not touch him. The *sīanap* lies in understanding the Guru's word through reflection.<sup>96</sup> This was shown and proved practically by the Guru when he visited important places of pilgrimages as Kurukshetra, Jamunā and Gangā at Prayāg.

Guru Arjan when talking about reason and the supreme wisdom acquired through the above mentioned perspective, links it with God's Grace. Reason which is termed as *sīanap* is mental faculty in one perspective (*maslat matā*) and power of man in other perspective (*sīanap jan kī*). It is held by the Guru that it is in no way of human achievement in its totality but it is linked with the grace of God. Only through this medium of Grace, reason (*sīanap*) rises to the higher level where one can understand God's will.<sup>97</sup> In continuance of the above thought, Guru Arjan used effort (*ghāl*) and discriminating faculty along with reason (*sīanap*). It is total earning of a man but it has been reminded that only perfect Guru can make a man worthy of earning it.<sup>98</sup>

At another place, Guru Arjan makes out the relationship of reason (*sīanap*) with zeal (*udam*) and power (*shaktī*). Even in repeating the Name of God it is believed that reason (*sīanap*) is an effective mentioned reason. No doubt the aim of man's life is to be one with God but this notion is not disassociated from reason. This living aspect

96. *Ibid*, M.4, p.1116.

*Gurbachanī māragi jo panthi chālē tin jamu jāgati nerhi na āiā.*

97. *Ibid*, M.5, p.380.

*Tere jan rasaki rasaki gun gāvahi.*

*Maslat matā sīanap jan kī jo tū karahi karāvahi.*

98. *Ibid*, M.5, p.915.

*Ghāl sīanap ukati na merī pūrai gurū kamāi.*



of Sikhism makes it a dynamic religion. So the reason which is basically a temporal phenomenon culminates into a part and parcel of revelation.

Guru Nanak makes clear distinction between fool (*mūrakh*) and wise (*siānā*). Fool for Guru is not a fixed category or can be termed fool by birth. Fool and wise are equally good part of the same Reality. The major factor with which both the words are deeply concerned is *Nām*. Even a cunning man to whom the Guru termed as *chatar siānā* can be a fool because of his inability to be near the *Nām*. One who understands the essence of the *Nām* is wise man. Some of the attributes of God expressed by Guru Nanak are the *kartā* and *dānā bīnā*. This term stands for all knowing and wise state. Reason which leads man to this higher goal is the real reason. And if it limits a man to wordly and temporary gains then it is cunningness.<sup>99</sup> So, according to Guru Nanak, the *siānā* is an accepted category of rationalist religious person. He himself has apprehended the True *Nām* and guides others also to attain that state.<sup>100</sup>

The fourth Guru, Ram Das, avers that reason is to be developed, it is to be evolved in man. Man is ignorant. The Guru is the perfect guide who instructs the man towards highest Truth. When man follows His instructions through his reason, he understands, the truth and with this understanding he himself becomes wise.<sup>101</sup> Again Guru Ramdas holds that only that man is wise (*siānā*) who has the Lord's love. His

99. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1015.

Jagi chaturu siānā bharam bhulānā nāu pandit parhahi gavānī.

100. *Ibid*, M.1, p.595.

Sabhnā marnā āiā vechhorhā sabhnā.

Puchhahu jāe siāniā āgai milanu kināh.

101. *Ibid*, M.4, p.168.

Mere rām ham bārik hariprabh ke hai iāne.

Dhanu dhanu guru guru satiguru padha jini hari updesu de kīe siāne.

only refuge is God's name. One is to understand that Name and God keep the honour of such a person.<sup>102</sup>

According to the fifth Guru, Guru Arjan, only those persons enjoy God's love who understand and follow the Guru's word. Only those persons can know Him whom He blesses with His vision. It implies that those persons are termed as wise who applied their reason to understand the word of Guru and this leads to the apprehension of the revelation. This is the approved way through which one can know the final truth.<sup>103</sup>

Bhai Gurdas avers that only that *siānap* works in the right direction which is in accordance with the will of God. It is a sort of conscious commitment and in this way the person does not make show of his wisdom. Only then he gets acceptance in religions (*dīn*), in the world (*dunī*) and before God (*dargāh*).<sup>104</sup> He further states that *siānap* is useful only if it leads to understand the perspective of truth. If it does not apprehend the truth, then it is of no avail.<sup>105</sup> He further holds that the *siānap* is useful only if it works to understand the aim of man's life which is termed as love of God and submission to the higher Truth.<sup>106</sup> According to Bhai Gurdas, the *siānap* which is acquired in

102. *Ibid*, M.4, p.450.

Jin antari hari hari prīti hai te jan siāne rām rāje.

103. *Ibid*, M.5, p.1074.

Jisu dehi darasu soī tudhu jānai.

Oh gur kei sabad sadā rang mānai.

104. Bhai Gurdas, *op.cit.*, 12/3, p.131.

Hau tisu vitahu vāriā hodai tāni ju hoe nitānā.

Hau tisu vitahu vāriā chhodi siānap hoe iānā.

105. *Ibid*, 18/19, p.201.

Sachahu orai sabh kihū lākh siānap sabhā thorhū.

106. *Ibid*, 21/7, p.225.

Sahas siānap lakh kam na avahi giān dhyān unman antu nā pāvahi.



the congregation of saints, where one links his consciousness with *śabad* and perceives *gurmant* is the real one. Otherwise a person may have the wordly wisdom but if he lives in the company of unholy and is a self-oriented person (*manmukh*), then his *siānap* is useless and he will be declared as a person without Guru.<sup>107</sup>

And a *siānā*, according to Bhai Gurdas, is a person who uses his reason to understand the instructions of the Guru and abides by these. The consciousness of such a person is linked with the *śabad* and he listens to nothing else but *gursabad*.<sup>108</sup> Again while describing the characteristics of *gurmukh*, Bhai Gurdas holds that *gurmukh* after taking birth lives under the fear (*nirmal bhau*) as a child. when he grows, he uses his reason to understand the instructions of the Guru. Thus he links himself with the love of God and worships Him in order to become *siānā*.<sup>109</sup> He again describes the characteristics of the wise person. He holds that a *siānā* is one who, through his reason, contemplates on the vision of God (*dist daras liv*). He is attentive and conscious and through reason links his consciousness with *śabad*.<sup>110</sup>

From the above discussion, we can say that a *siānā* is one who uses his reason to understand the higher truth, the higher Reality as directed by the Guru. He apprehends that Truth and lives in tune with that Truth. He becomes the man of higher vision. Through reason he perceives the higher truth which is revealed through *śabad*. So he understands the revelation through reason.

107. *Ibid*, 30/2, p.326.

Sādhsangati sachu bāg hai sabad surati gurmantu schāvan.

Vihu vanuvali asādh sangi bahuti siānap nigosāvan.

108. *Ibid*, 4/17, p.51.

Gur sikhī gur sikh suni andari siāna bahari bholā

sabad surati sāvdhān hoi vinu gursabad na sunai.....

109. *Ibid*, 32/1, p.344.

Pahilā gurmukhī janam lai bhai vichi vartai hoi iānā.

Gursikh lai gursikhu hoi bhāi bhagati vichi khara siānā.

110. *Ibid*, 32/2, p.344.

disti daras liv sāvdhān sabad surati chetah siānā

nāmu dānu isnan dirhu man bach karam karai melana.

Finally, it can be summed up that Bhai Gurdas makes clear distinctions between the lower reason and higher reason. Unless the seeker travel's towards the higher reason, he stagnates. Reason in the first instance ought to be linked with *surati*. It can be done in the guidance of Guru. Reason in this way is not only an outward faculty but a growth from within. It has to be translated into action. Then the seeker's reason will be expressed into good, creative and innocent actions (*bāhri bhola*). This *sīānap* can only be maintained in the company of noble persons and is termed as *bhāi bhagat* by Bhai Gurdas.

## Superstitious—Rational

The function of the *soch* (reason) on theoretical level is the discovery of truth, as we have seen. It is to make us understand the Name, which is the manifestation of ultimate Truth. On practical level, its ideal is to direct our conduct, to guide us how to live in the world. Practice is the manifestation of theory. So, in Sikhism the ideal of the *soch* has been to take away man from the irrational, the superstitions and to make him rational. According to Sikh thought, the ultimate truth is 'Akāl Purakh, (God). For man the main ideal is to understand this final truth for which reason helps to apprehend. There is none else except Him. The universe is His manifestation. He is the cause of the universe. The second ideal for man is to live according to this ideal. His conduct should be guided by this Truth. He is to live under this light, attuned with the One who created this universe. "Their birth is blessed who are attuned to Him and serve Him".<sup>111</sup> Again, according to Sikhism, only that person is wise who understands Lord's wisdom, who has the knowledge that He is all-pervasive and such a person is

111. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.432.

Sasai soi srisati jini sāji sabhnā sāhib eku bhaia.

Sevat rahe chitu jin ka lāgā āiā tin ka saphalu bhaia.



not overwhelmed by ego; because he lives according to this truth.<sup>112</sup> When man understands this truth, which reason helps him to, he does not live under superstition.

The word superstition is used both in a concrete and in an abstract sense. We group together as superstitions a number of beliefs, habits and fancies, tribal and individual which we regard as not being founded on reasonable conceptions of the world and of human life, necessities and obligations.<sup>113</sup>

Due to superstition, natural phenomena is ascribed to the agency of supernatural forces. These forces are personified into gods, *devatās*, semi gods and *devīs*. These complete or fragmentary personalities are considered accessible by prayer and sacrifice. Some sort of magic is also performed to win their favour. We find many such ideas in *Vedas*. For example, the thunder and lightening is considered the act of Indra *Devā* and prayer and sacrifice is performed to win his favour. Now in Sikhism, it is told that every thing is under the control of God. He is all powerful. There is no need to perform sacrifices. The ideal of the *soch* is to discover this truth and contemplate on this and to live according to this deal.

Superstition in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is not accepted in any form. Superstition is considered *bharam* in Sikhism. It is veiled thinking, misunderstanding and irrelevance of cause and effect. In *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, it is said that first God created His light and then from it was created the whole universe. Man should not be misled by

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112. *Ibid*, M.1, p432.

Gagai giānu bujhai je koi parhiā panditu soi.

Sarab jiā mahi eko jānai te haumai kahai na koi.

113. James Hastings, *op.cit.*, 'Superstition'

doubt because the creator is there in the created and the created is there in the Creator. All the universe is filled by Him.<sup>114</sup> Bharam and *bhai* are causes of superstition. When man makes himself free from both he becomes rational.

Guru Gobind Singh makes for all times to come that worship of idols, stones, graves, animals cannot yield any result. It is all misguiding; *kūr kirya*.<sup>115</sup> One should understand the secret of God.

The above explanation is deeply related with the *soch*. Without using it as a medium it is difficult to make man free from all apparent bonds. Those who refuse to acknowledge progress in religion and cling persistently to outworn notions thus become the victims of superstition. In Sikhism, earnest efforts have been made to free man from superstitions and apply his *soch* in order to be rational in his behaviour and conduct.

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114. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Kabir, pp.1349-50.

Avali alāh nūr upāiā qudrati ke sabh bande.

Ek nūr te sabhu jagu upajiā kaun bhale ko mande.

Logā bharami na bhulahū bhāi

Khāliku khalak khalak mahi khāliku pūri rahio srab thāi.

115. *Dasam Granth*, op.cit., p.21.



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# **4**

## **KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE AND ROLE OF REASON IN SIKHISM**

**Part I : Giān–Suniai–Manniai–Dhyān**

**Part II : Hukam–Uniformity of Nature–  
Sabad–Sach**



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## PART I

In the third chapter 'Nature of Reason in Sikhism' we have discussed the general meaning and definition of reason in Sikhism. While discussing the nature of reason we have also dealt with the concept of *bādī* and *khojī* and have seen that the search for truth is encouraged in Sikhism. The sole aim of human life, according to this view, is to seek the highest Truth and to live in tune with it. In the fourth chapter, kinds of knowledge and role of reason is the subject matter of study. We are to see as to what is the Sikh view of knowledge and its kinds. We shall also refer to the place and role of reason in this context. We shall first analyse the general notion of *gīān* (Skt. *jñānā*). The Sikh Gurus appear to have outlined a triadic concept to represent various kinds of knowledge. These are *sunniā*, *manne*, *ek dhyān*. These are comparable to somewhat similar view in the *Upaniśads*.

There is also a very interesting use of the idea of *hukam* by the Sikh Gurus in their general discourse about the kinds of knowledge. The word is of the Arabic language and has been used in the *Quran*. Often it is used in a sense in which the notion of the uniformity of Nature is cited as a formal ground of induction. By describing *hukam* as divine will in nature, the Gurus appear to guard against the traditional infirmity associated with the idea of the uniformity of nature as a ground of induction. We have, therefore, decided to divide the fourth chapter in two parts. The first part of the chapter will be devoted to the statement and analyses of *gīān* and of *suniai*, *manne* and *dhyān*. We shall also refer to the *Upaniśadic* view in this regard.



We shall plan the second part of the chapter, in a manner that we shall first begin with the semitic (to be more precise) of the Islamic origin of *hukam* and its use in Sikhism. In the (second) part of the chapter, the idea of *śabad* as testimony, as well as *sach* as truth, will also be discussed.

## Gīan (Knowledge)

Knowledge, the English equivalent of *gīan*, has been defined in many ways. According to a Dictionary of Philosophy, knowledge means 'relations known and apprehended truth'.<sup>1</sup> To know means to be conscious of something. Knowledge means consciousness. According to another Dictionary of Philosophy, there are three main kinds of knowledge: (a) knowledge that or 'factual knowledge'; (b) knowledge how, or 'practical knowledge'<sup>2</sup> and (c) knowledge of people, places and things, or 'knowledge by acquaintance'. Such knowledge often involves knowledge of types (a) and (b), but does not necessarily to do so. For example, one may have a vague knowledge of a person, even though one cannot state any facts about them.

One scholar observes that, "According to *Advaita Vedānta*, knowledge is manifest (*svataḥ prakāśa*). It requires no other knowledge to know it. Knowledge neither apprehends itself, nor is apprehended by another knowledge. Like sunlight it shines of itself and does not require any other light for its manifestation while manifesting other things."<sup>3</sup>

In Sikhism, three ways of knowing or kinds of knowledge have been accepted. These are knowledge, by perception (perceptual knowledge), through reason (rational knowledge) and through intuition (intuitive knowledge). The first kind of knowledge is that knowledge which we get through the senses. It is also called non-inferential

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1. Dagobert D. Runes, *Dictionary of Philosophy*, 'Knowledge'.
  2. Antony Flew, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, 'Knowledge'.
  3. Swami Satprakashānanda, *op.cit.*, p.110.

knowledge. According to some Western scholars, our non-inferential knowledge about facts has two sources - sensation and memory. As Russell observes, "when we speak of 'knowledge,' we generally imply a distinction between the knowing and what is known, but in sensation there is no such distinction. 'Perception,' as the word is used by most psychologists, is of the nature of knowledge, but it is so because of the adjuncts which are added to pure sensation by experience, or, possibly, by congenital dispositions."<sup>4</sup>

Perception has been termed as '*pratyaksa*' in Sanskrit language, which, etymologically means the function of any sense-organ with respect to its object . . . It refers to sense-perception as a means of direct or immediate knowledge of an object. In a wide sense, the word signifies any means of direct or immediate knowledge, not merely the process of sensory knowledge. Thus, as a substantive, *pratyaksa* denotes a *pramāna* that leads to direct and valid knowledge.<sup>5</sup> In its broader sense perception is two-fold: external and internal. When we get the perception through any one of five sensory organs of hearing, seeing, touching, tasting and smelling, it is external perception. Mental perception of pleasure and pain, knowledge and ignorance, love and hate etc. is internal one. The knowledge of external things which is got through sense-perception is most natural and direct. As observed by a Western scholar, "Knowledge of appearance is revealed to us immediately in the sensory experience of how things look, how they feel, how they sound and smell and taste. Every perception, besides revealing a certain group of qualities does also point beyond itself and contain an anticipatory judgement which would make it cognitive, even in the sense required."<sup>6</sup>

4. Bertrand Russell, *Human Knowledge*, (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1966), p.440.

5. Swami Satprakashānanda, *op.cit.*, p.35.

6. William Pepperell Montague, *The Ways of Knowing*, (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., fifth impression, 1958), p.186.



In Sikhism, the word 'gīān' has been used for knowledge which is a Punjabi version of the Sanskrit word *jñāna* which is a noun. The root of the word *jñāna* is *vid* originally identical with *vindata*. The meaning of the word *vid* is to find, discover, obtain, acquire.<sup>7</sup> The word *jñāna* means knowing, becoming acquainted with, knowledge, especially the higher knowledge derived from meditation on the universal spirit.<sup>8</sup> It is the level of consciousness, a state of knowing.

In *Japuji*, in the very first reference to *gīān* it has been used in both the senses of perceptual knowledge as well as rational knowledge. Initially, it is said that the number of devotees is countless. This refers to perceptual knowledge. It is further mentioned that reflection on the qualities of the higher Reality leads to knowledge. This rational knowledge leads to the devotion of the man to the higher Reality.<sup>9</sup> It is further held in *Japuji* that to apprehend the higher Truth perceptual knowledge is most important which is the first step towards knowing. It has been termed as *gīān khand*,<sup>10</sup> the region of knowledge. In this region, the seeker gets the knowledge of the many kinds of wind, water, and fire or heat. It means he acquires empirical and perceptual knowledge of various objects of the world. He learns the cause and effect of various events, objects, and relations, the process of generation and death and of the heavenly bodies. He is required to obtain the knowledge of the world, the planets, the solar system, the stars, the moons and the suns. This is the one aspect of knowledge by perception, and involves the knowledge of geographical regions, with laws of nature of generation and destruction and the heavenly bodies. The second aspect by perception described in this very stanza is the knowledge of society and the principles of social relations, of the many religious practices of the people, of their myths and symbols.

7. Monier Monier Williams, *op.cit.*, 'vid'

8. *Ibid*, 'Jñāna', p.426.

9. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.4.  
asankh jap asankh bhāu.  
asankh pūja asankh tap tāu.

10. *Ibid*, M.1, p.7.  
dharam khand ka eho dharam.  
gīān khand ka akahu karam.



The third aspect of perceptual knowledge is concerned with the cultural traditions of the people, the literary and historical aspect of man, and their efforts and achievements in the field of learning and wisdom. Thus, the field of perceptual knowledge is very wide. It expands the consciousness of the seeker in vast directions. It is the first and a necessary step for a seeker to cover all these fields of knowledge. One scholar has interpreted this as part of the *gīān khand* and says, "The first condition of obtaining His Grace in one's life is to open out one's consciousness so that it may obtain the reflection in it of the myriads of created forms and structures in the universe."<sup>11</sup> This is referred to in stanzas VIII-XI (Hearing and Reading) of the *Japuji*. In the stanza under discussion, the sequence is logical and is indicated where possible by representative examples within our experience. In the region of knowledge, according to Guru Nanak, the ignorance is destroyed and awareness expands and knowledge leads to bliss, knowledge itself is bliss.<sup>12</sup>

We have seen above how perceptual knowledge or empirical knowledge has been considered a necessary step towards the knowledge of the higher Reality. It is the direct knowledge of the physical universe or the external facts which is attainable by the sense-object contact.

The second kind of knowledge is rational knowledge. The means of such knowledge is reason and reflection. The knowledge which we get through reason is a cultivated knowledge. As mentioned above, though based on the sensible facts, it goes beyond the reach of the senses and is able to be aware of the general and the unseen. In *Advaita Vedānta* and other *Vedic* schools of thought also, it has been called inferential knowledge. We are told that perception acquaints us with the particulars of a thing (*viśesavadharanā-pradhāna*)\_ and

11. Sohan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.97.

12. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.7.  
gīān khand mahi gīānu parchandu.  
tithai nād binod kod anandu.



inference with its general nature (*sāmānyavadharana-prādhana*).<sup>13</sup>

Guru Nanak does not reject the empirical knowledge totally as some rationalists might have done, nor does he consider the empirical knowledge as the only valid knowledge as some empiricists have stressed. He considers the perceptual knowledge as the first and often complementing step towards the rational knowledge which we will discuss later. Every kind of knowledge has got its own area of performance. Both should be combined in such a way that they supplement each other to achieve the still higher knowledge which is called intuitive. Kant has also observed that, "Concepts without precepts are empty, and precepts without concepts are blind."<sup>14</sup> The data which we get through sense-perception would be irrelevant and disjointed unless it is unified and integrated by the relations known through reflection and reason.

The third kind of knowledge which the Guru has stressed along with perceptual and rational knowledge is intuitive knowledge. The knowledge which is attained by a super-rational and super-sensuous faculty is called intuitive knowledge. It is mostly related with mysticism. The knowledge attained through such a faculty is considered related with the higher truths of Reality which are above relations, while the rational knowledge is knowledge about relations. Intuition has been understood very differently by many epistemologists. At one place, intuition has been defined as, "the direct and immediate apprehension by a knowing subject of itself, of its conscious states, of other minds, of an external world, of universals, of values or of rational truths."<sup>15</sup> At another place it is held that intuitive knowledge is a form of uninferred or immediate knowledge. Two principle philosophical uses of the term may be distinguished; first, uninferred knowledge of the truth of a 'proposition,' second, immediate knowledge of a non-propositional object. In the latter sense,

13. Swami Satprakāśhānanda, *op.cit.*, p.36.

14. William Pepperel Montague, *op.cit.*, p.219.

15. Dagobert D. Runes, *op.cit.*, 'Intuition'.



four kinds of non-propositional objects have been claimed as intuitable. (a) universals; (b) concepts, as in the case of correctly applying a concept without being able to state its rules of application; (c) sensible objects, as in Kant's account of our immediate, non-conceptual relation to sensible objects; and (d) ineffable objects as in Bergson's account of the inexpressible awareness of 'duree' (duration) or in certain religious accounts of our awareness of God.<sup>16</sup>

It has been held in the *Upaniśads*, "there is a higher power which enables us to grasp this central spiritual reality. Spiritual things require to be spiritually discerned . . . . Man has the faculty of divine insight or mystic intuition, by which he transcends the distinctions of intellect and solves the riddles of reason."<sup>17</sup> So, it is clear from the above definitions that the knowledge gained through intuition is direct and immediate. It is the knowledge concerned with the higher truths and Reality, the universal truths. Intuitive knowledge is above the perceptual and rational knowledge which has been given great importance both in the East and the West.

As mentioned earlier, Guru Nanak has laid stress upon these three parts of knowledge as, perceptual, rational and intuitive knowledge.<sup>18</sup> One kind is as important as the other one. Guru Nanak has explained the importance of the three. The one aspect is related with the perceptual knowledge through which man knows the physical objects of this universe as sun and moon etc. He has created man with his five sense-organs and subtle organs. Man has the faculty to know. When man reflects, and through reflection attains the rational

16. Antony Flew, *op.cit.*, p.165.

17. Swami Satprakāśhānanda, *op.cit.*, pp.194-195.

18. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.57.  
giān anjanu bhaibhanjā dekhu niranjan bhāi.  
guptu pargat sabh jānīai je manu rākhai thāe.



knowledge, he becomes fearless, because knowledge destroys the fear. For the knowledge through reflection and contemplation the word 'gīān-anjan' has been used by the Gurus, and refers to a process of knowledge.<sup>19</sup> And this process is not related with reason. The seeker can have the knowledge of the secrets of the Reality if he keeps his mind open and receptive. His mental awareness is related to the higher knowledge which discloses the secrets of the higher Reality. According to Guru Nanak, gīān<sup>20</sup> is something which is gained and the gaining or achieving of knowledge is related with perceptual and rational knowledge. The *gīān* is seen as *sojhī hoe*, which refers to intuition. Intuitive knowledge is the highest knowledge through which man is united with the higher truth. When man attains all the three kinds of knowledge, his consciousness expands and he knows the whole cosmos. He has the consciousness of the three regions of the universe. These regions are: this world, the upper region and the lower region of the universe.

Guru Nanak has also used the word 'gīān dhian' or 'gīān vichar' for rational knowledge. According to him, truth cannot be achieved through ritualistic *karam-kānd* as some *yogīs* have been doing. Truth can only be awakened in man through rational knowledge.<sup>21</sup> Rational knowledge leads to the consciousness of truth. He further holds that

19. *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Steek*, (Faridkot wala Teeka, Vol.1, Language Department Punjab, 1970), p.158.

20. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.60.  
sachā nenu na tutaī je satguru bhetai soi.  
gīān padārathu paīai tribhavan sojhī hoi.

21. *Ibid*, M.1, p.223.  
ek sabad ik bhikhīā māngai.  
gīānu dhīānu jugati sachu jāgai.

rational knowledge<sup>22</sup> is emancipator of man and dispels the darkness of ignorance.

According to Guru Nanak, intuitive knowledge is the highest knowledge which he calls a jewel 'gian ratan.'<sup>23</sup> It comes to the mind with the blessing of God, in other words, man attains this highest knowledge with the Grace of God. Through intuitive knowledge man attains the highest truth of life and the evil nature of man is destroyed. He becomes all Truth. Guru Nanak holds<sup>24</sup> that knowledge is the emancipator of man. It leads to deliverance while ignorance becomes the cause of man's bondage. Without intuitive knowledge, whatever man says or discusses is all vain and foolishness and creates confusion.

The Guru has expressed the relation and interdependence of each kind of knowledge.<sup>25</sup> These do not oppose each other but have their own areas of operation, they supplement each other. Without the help of reason, perception is not of much use and reason does not become fruitful unless man intuites essence of truth. When a mind is illumined by knowledge, it dispels the darkness of ignorance as when a lamp is lit, its light dispels the darkness. So when man perceives the scriptural knowledge through reading and listening his mind is rid of sins because ignorance gives rise to all wrongs and through scriptural knowledge ignorance vanishes. But mere reading or listening of *Vedas*

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22. *Ibid*, M.1, p.228.

kiratu paia ardh uradhi binu gian bichara.

binu upma jagdis ki binsai na andhiara.

23. *Ibid*, M.1, p.354.

Jan tudhu bhavai ta durmati jai.

gian ratanu mani vasai ai.

24. *Ibid*, M.1, p.466.

haumai bujhai ta daru sujhai.

gian vihuna kathi kathi lujhai.

25. *Ibid*, M.1, p.791.

ugavai suru na japai chandu.

jah gian pargasu agianu mitantu.



is just a routine matter if it is without reflection. So to gain knowledge through reflection is very necessary. At the same time, mere reasoning or discoursing does not lead anywhere if one does not intuit the essence of that knowledge. So perceptual knowledge, rational knowledge and intuitive knowledge supplement each other.

Guru Angad Dev, the second Guru has also composed a couplet to this effect.<sup>26</sup> Though he does not say much about the three kinds of knowledge discussed above but he indicates that rational knowledge leads to intuitive knowledge the nature of which is revelatory. The knowledge contained in *bānī* is such intuitive knowledge which has been intuited through rational knowledge. And the knowledge which is not based on reason, creates illusion only. And illusion gives birth to error.

Guru Amardas<sup>27</sup> has referred to rational knowledge as awakening of mind and ignorance as slumber. According to the Guru, rational knowledge is attained through the *gun-vīchār*. Through this his consciousness expands and once this is achieved, he never loses the received knowledge. Then he has rational knowledge related with intuition which is called '*bujhnā*'. The intuitive knowledge is known through the Guru. This intuitive truth is known only to rational men and saints. Guru Amardas has also used '*div drishti*'<sup>28</sup> for intuitive knowledge which dispels illusion. *Śabad* is the medium to convey the intuitive knowledge of the Gurus. The seeker is not only supposed to listen or read the *śabad* but to reflect upon it. Through that reflection

26. *Ibid*, M.2, p.1243.

Utam madhim jāṭi jinsī bharami bhavai sansāru  
A:nrit bānī tatu vākhānī giān dhīān vīchār.

27. *Ibid*, M.3, p.160.

manmukh sūta māyā mohi piāri.  
gurmukhi jāge gun giān bichāri.  
se jan jāge jin nām piāri, sahaje jāgai savai na koi.  
pūre gur te būjhai janū koi.

28. *Ibid*, M.3, p.1016.

Dih drisatī jāgai bharamu chukāi gur parsādi param padu pāi.  
So jogi ihu jugati pachhānai gur kai sabadi bichāri jio.



man understands that the world is not going to last for ever. It is not eternal. Real knowledge is eternal, which goes beyond this world. The Guru does not reject the world of the perceptual knowledge but he insists that man should understand the world in its right perspective. Its right perspective is that it is transitory. For transitoriness he used the word '*māyā*.' This is understood through rational knowledge. The seeker is needed to understand the law of causation. The whole creation, the world is involved in virtue and sin, pleasure and pain. All this leads to sorrow. The only way to come out of it is to be God-conscious, to be conscious of the higher truth.<sup>29</sup> So, the seeker needs to understand the existence of the objects objectively and in their right perspective.

Guru Ramdas has combined the perceptual, rational and intuitive knowledge. He has used the word *giān-kharag*.<sup>30</sup> *Kharag* is the symbol of force and *giān-kharag* represents the inner-force of mind. He relates *giān* with hearing and contemplation, which are perceptual and rational knowledge. And when he contemplates, he gets the knowledge that this seeming world is not everything. There is Reality beyond this world and he becomes free of worldly ailments. Through intuitive knowledge which is called *kharag* here and is given by the *Satiguru*, he conquers the fear of death. When the source of ills is removed through *giān kharag*, man becomes spiritually intact and need not die a spiritual death. The knowledge he gets through reflection and intellect, should illumine his mind and body.

The tenth Guru has called the intuitive knowledge '*param gian*.'<sup>31</sup> *Man attains 'param giān'* when he contemplates on the

29. *Ibid*, M.3, p.1052.

*Māyā mohi sabhu jagatu upāiā brahmā bisanu dev sabāiā.*  
*Jo tudh bhāve se nām lāge giān mati pachhāiā he.*

30. *Ibid*, M.4, p.574.

*Hari hari nāmu jini āradhiā tin ke dukh pāp nivāre*  
*Satigur giān kharagu hathi dīnā jam kankar māri bidāre.*

31. *Dasam Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji* (Amritsar, Bazar Mai Sewan), p.677.

*Bhupat param giān jab pāyo*  
*Man bach karam kathan kartā ko jau kar dhiān lagāyo.*



higher Reality in his mind, speech and actions. When he attains '*param gian*' he comes to know the essence of Truth. He comes to know that every other existence is transitory except that one Reality, '*tai*' which is everlasting. It is this realization which illumines human mind with supreme light. Thereby man attains '*abhai pad*' and conquers everything.

From the whole discussion which we have so far done regarding the kinds of knowledge in Sikhism we have come to know that three kinds of knowledge are accepted and considered valid in Sikhism. They are: perceptual knowledge which is expressed through the words such as, "*dekhīā* or *vekhīā*, *sunīā*, *janiā*," etc. The perceptual knowledge is related with the universe and man, with the whole creation. Sensory knowledge has not been rejected. It has been accepted as kind of knowledge because it is the first step towards knowing Truth. But it is held in Sikhism that sensory knowledge is not the only knowledge. There are truths which are above or beyond perceptual knowledge. These truths are known through rational knowledge. These truths are related with man's culture, society, religion and man's relation with man and society etc. Reason provides us the relational knowledge. But still there is a Reality which is above relations, the realization of which is the ultimate goal of man's existence. Rational knowledge provides the door to that knowledge but it cannot be apprehended through reason. That knowledge which is related with man's spiritual craving is intuitive. It is realized knowledge. Every kind of knowledge has its own sphere. One kind of knowledge does not interfere with the sphere of another. Rather they supplement each other. As held by a scholar, "*Pramāna* is the special means by which some kind of right knowledge (*pramā*) is attained. The implication is that each *pramān* has a characteristic way of conveying knowledge and presents a distinct type of knowledge, and it is not in the nature of one *pramāna* to contradict another."<sup>32</sup>

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32. Swami Satprakashānanda, *op.cit.*, p.35.

We have discussed the kinds of knowledge and the concept of *giān* in Sikhism. We shall now undertake a more detailed study of the three aspects of knowledge elaborated by Guru Nanak in the Japuji as *sunīai*, *manne* and *ek dhyan*. These steps are related with the kinds of knowledge we have discussed. *Sunīai* is related with the perception of knowledge, *manne* with the rationality of knowledge and *dhyan* is related with the contemplation of knowledge which leads to intuitive knowledge. We will discuss now the concept of *sunīai* in detail which is related both with the perception of knowledge and knowledge by hearing of *śabad*.

## Sunīai

When we look at the concept of *sunīai* in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, it seems that *sunīai* is the Punjabi term for *śravaṇa* in Sanskrit language. According to Sir Monier Monier Williams in Sanskrit language, "*śravaṇa* is a noun which means 'the art of hearing' also that which is heard '*śruti*', it is *śravanat*, because it is so heard or revealed" i.e. according to a *Vedic* text. It is further explained as, "acquiring knowledge by hearing, learning, study."<sup>33</sup>

As discussed in the second chapter, in *Vedānta* system of Hindu philosophy, the *Upaniśads*, the *Bhāgavad Gītā* and the *Brahma Sūtra* which also means the systems of Sankara, Rāmānuja and Madhva, the path of self-realization for the seeker has been described as three fold. This three fold path has been further described as, "Hearing the Vedic dictum (*śravaṇa*), reflection on it (*manana*) and meditation (*nididdhyāsana*)."<sup>34</sup> So *śravaṇa* is the first stage on the path of realization in the *Vedānta* system. It has already been discussed in detail in the second chapter.

33. Sir Monier Monier Williams, *op.cit.*, 'śravaṇa'

34. Swami Satprakāśhānanda, *op.cit.*, p.153.



In *Mahān Kosh*, the meaning of the word *sunīai* has been explained as, 'from hearing.'<sup>35</sup> Another traditional scholar has explained *sunīai* in terms of linking of mind to God's Name.<sup>36</sup> But some of the modern scholars have linked *sunīai* with knowledge. As a scholar has put it, "He (Guru Nanak) lays down three-fold steps for the cultivation of wisdom and then these steps are further seen to deal with the various aspects of knowledge."<sup>37</sup> He further observes that, "*Suniya* (hearing), as a way of acquiring wisdom, occurs first."<sup>38</sup>

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism dealt in detail with the concept of *sunīai*. In *Japuji* four stanzas can be made the basis for the above mentioned concept.<sup>39</sup> In *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, *sunīai* is related with the knowledge acquired through sensory organ, ear as well as the hearing of the *sabad*. Though the hearing of *sabad* involves the sensory organ, ear but it is concerned with the spiritual perspective. Meaning hereby that it does not end with hearing but continues till the transformation. In this context, the *sabad* (the word) is to be sung along with hearing.<sup>40</sup> It is not only drumming into the ear which does not reach the heart. It creates inner atmosphere which is termed as "*man rakhīai bhāo*." With this total personality is changed. Here pain vanishes automatically and the happiness makes the heart its permanent abode. This leads to awakening of the mind.

The Guru takes the world of knowledge step by step. As one scholar remarks, "the Guru does not take the world of knowledge in one jumble. He differentiates the field of knowledge and proceeds

35. Kahan Singh Nabha, *op.cit.*, p.158.

36. Sahib Singh, (Vol.1), *op.cit.*, p.65.

37. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.87.

38. *Ibid*, p.88.

39. *Ibid*, p.88.

40. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.2.  
gāvīai sunīai manī rakhīai bhāu.  
dukhu parhari sukhu ghari lai jāi

from one part of it to another in the natural order - that is the order which a novice will find most helpful in expanding the domain of his mind."<sup>41</sup> Now we analyse the four relevant stanzas of *Japuji*. In the first stanza we acquire, by hearing, the knowledge about, "(i) the lives of the realized persons and (ii) the various aspects of the world," as observed by a scholar.<sup>42</sup> We learn about the *siddhās* (men of extra-ordinary powers), *pīras* (religious leaders) and *suranāthas* (great religious preceptors).<sup>43</sup> *Sunīai* provides the knowledge of the different aspects of the world as the earth, its support, the skies, the continents, the fourteen worlds, the lower regions. In this way, the seeker's mind and consciousness expands and gets systematized. The first step to know Him is to know His Creation and this advancement is made possible through hearing which is the first stage of knowledge.

The second stanza<sup>44</sup> provides the knowledge about the beings of higher consciousness such as gods like Śiva, Indra and Brahmā and the secrets of higher consciousness to the seeker. He also hears of the recorded experience of the higher consciousness such as in the *Vedas*, the *Śāstras*, *Smritis* etc. It all provides him knowledge and expands his consciousness. And he rises above evil and suffering due to this knowledge.

In the third stanza,<sup>45</sup> the seeker acquires the knowledge about the higher ethical principles such as truthfulness and learns "about such fundamental moral qualities as wisdom, contentment,

41. Sohan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.29.

42. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.88.

43. Sohan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.27.

44. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.2.

*sunīai īsarū brahmā indu.*

*sunīai mukhi śālāhanu mndu.*

45. *Ibid*, M.1, p.3.

*sunīai satu sntokku gīanū.*



purification. He hears about virtues which ought to be cultivated by the perfect man."<sup>46</sup> Here the mind ascends to the knowledge of higher values which finally leads to the knowledge of higher values which finally leads to the knowledge of the source of All. This is the concentration of mind (*sahaj dhiān*).

In the fourth stanza,<sup>47</sup> the seeker acquires the knowledge of the practical application of wisdom to those leaders who after acquiring knowledge guide others on the right path. "He learns how these leaders helped others and guided persons at times of difficulty."<sup>48</sup>

Guru Nanak has supported this view further in his *bānī*, to acquire knowledge as mentioned above man should 'hear' as long as he lives in this world.<sup>49</sup>

Guru Ramdas holds that *sunīai*<sup>50</sup> along with providing the bliss-giving moments is a contemplation. It transforms the mind and enables man to comprehend the Reality (*bujhai*). This is the second level of knowledge. The seeker does not only apprehend the Reality but he acts upon this truth. The third level of knowledge which is also the highest one is also referred to where he realizes the Pure Self (*Nānak mani tani ravi rahīā gurmukhi hari soi*). This is the pure level where the seeker continues this activity. He is ceaselessly involved into action. The seeker is not only to apprehend the Truth, the highest Reality but he is to live in that ideal.

46. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.88.

47. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.8.  
suniai sarā gunā ke gāh.  
suniai sekh pīr pātisāh.

48. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.88

49. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.661.  
jab lagu duniā rahīai Nanak kichhu sunīai kichhu kahīai.

50. *Ibid*, p.1239.  
nāmu niranjanu nirmalā suniai sukhu hoi.  
suni suni mani vasaīai bujhai janu koi.

Guru Arjan holds<sup>51</sup> that all wisdom and all meditation comes in hearing the Gospel of Perfect God. The knowledge in *suniai* proceeds from lower to higher stages as described in '*suniai sās̄t simrat ved*'. First comes the knowledge of systems, then of the *Smritis* which is the remembered knowledge and then comes the revealed knowledge. So knowledge is gained step by step from lower level to higher level. It is knowledge from without.

## The Concept of Manne

After the first stage of knowledge, *suniai* or hearing, the second stage of knowledge follows which is termed as '*manne*'. As discussed by a learned scholar, Guru Nanak considers it necessary that the seeker should not only acquire knowledge by *suniai* from the testimony of others as mentioned above but he must reflect on what he 'hears'.<sup>52</sup> So, after this, in Indian tradition also it is observed that "*śravana* or hearing the Scripture is the first step to spiritual realisation."<sup>53</sup> So, after hearing the *śruti* or the truth from the preceptor the seeker should reflect upon it. It is further remarked that, "belief should set us on the reflection, *manana*, and contemplation, *nididhyāsana*, which results in *ātma-darsana* or vision of the self."<sup>54</sup> The term '*manne*' is the Punjabi form of the Sanskrit word *manana*, meaning thinking, reflection.<sup>55</sup>

51. *Ibid*, p.783.

gīan dhīan pūran parmasaru hari hari kathā nit suniai,

52. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.88.

53. Radhakrishnan, S., *Brahma Sutra*, *op.cit.*, p.116.

54. *Ibid*, p.116.

55. Sir Monier Monier Williams, *op.cit.*, *mananq*, p.783.



In the first stanza about *manne* or reflection,<sup>56</sup> Guru Nanak warns the seeker that the process of reflection cannot be fully described and that whosoever makes such a claim would have to realize its futility at the end. This failure to describe the process of *manne* rises from the fact that the possibilities involved in reflection are so vast and infinite. In the Guru's words, there are not enough paper, enough pen or enough writers to describe it. Being conscious of its limitations, Guru Nanak, however, ventures to describe the process of reflection.<sup>57</sup>

It is held in the second stanza that through reflection the consciousness of the mind and the intellect are fashioned and sharpened.<sup>58</sup> The seeker realizes the true nature of Reality and is able to follow the right path and avoid the wrong one. It is through reflection that man is able to discriminate between right and wrong.

In the third stanza of *manne*,<sup>59</sup> Guru Nanak holds that *manne* (reflection) removes all the hindrances from the path of the seeker.<sup>60</sup> A man of reason or reflection receives great honour and distinction. Reason clears his mind from waywardness and hesitation. He now walks on a straight path or the broad and straight and clear way.

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56. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.3.  
manne kī gati kahī na jāi.  
je ko kahai pichhai pachhutāi.

57. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.90.

58. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.3.  
mannai surati hovai mani budhi.  
mannai sagal bhavan kī sudhi.

59. *Ibid*, p.3.  
mannai māragi thāk na pāi.  
mannai pati siu pargatu jāi.

60. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.90.

As pointed out by a learned scholar,<sup>61</sup> according to Guru Nanak, the seeker of truth endowed with reflection does not break away from the society. He continues to perform moral acts.

In the fourth and the last stanza<sup>62</sup> in the series, it is told that the man of reflection realizes the ultimate aim of human life, the salvation. according to Guru, such a seeker of truth commits himself to the spiritual transformation of the people. He realizes through reflection that one spirit runs through the whole human race. So, the whole of humanity now appears to him as one family, one single unit. He, therefore, starts working for the help of the whole mankind. In this way, he himself is liberated from the bondage of the world and helps others to achieve this goal. This activity becomes saturated with the aim of helping others. He indeed is a wise man, a man of knowledge. The wisdom lies in the depth and comprehension of his realization and is indicated in his altruistic activity.<sup>63</sup>

Another scholar summarizes the role of reflection in the life of the seeker as given by the Guru in these four stanzas as, "The man of reflection understands the true significance of things and therefore comprehends his own destiny. This enables him to avoid the wrong path and to take the straight road of *dharma*, of spiritual advancement. Having obtained his own release, he acts as a guide to other men."<sup>64</sup>

In the concept of '*sunīai*', we have discussed that the knowledge which we get through '*sunīai*' has two aspects. One is related with the common meaning that is general knowledge attained by hearing. Another is '*sunīai*' of '*śabad*'. And we also discussed while talking about '*manne*' that whatsoever knowledge the seeker gets through the hearing of the '*śabad*', he is to reflect upon that. So the reflection is

61. *Ibid*, p.90.

62. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.3.  
mannai pāvahi mokhu duāru.  
mannai parvārai sādharu.

63. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.90-91.

64. Sohan Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.38-39.



upon '*sabad*' which he hears. '*Manne*' is the higher stage of knowledge. But it does not complete the process. The process is completed at the third stage, the stage of '*dhīan*' which will be discussed later on.

As pointed out by Avtar Singh, there has been a controversy about the interpretation of '*manne*' as reflection. He says that, "the traditional interpretation of *manne* by various scholars of Sikhism has been in almost all the cases, in the sense of belief, or believing, or sometimes as obedience. We thus find Macauliffe, Bishan Singh, Sahib Singh and recently Gopal Singh rendering *manne* as belief or obedience."<sup>65</sup> The learned scholar has given arguments, which are well founded, to support the interpretation of *manne* as reflection. He says that, "the arguments against the traditional meaning of *manne* as belief is that all the four stanzas dealing with it are rendered meaningless if we accept it as belief. If it was to be understood as belief, Guru Nanak could have said simply in one line (after the stanzas dealing with hearing) that he has heard. The matter would have ended there. But in this event, Guru Nanak would have left the Sikhs with a sort of a dogmatic belief, accepted without any reflection, which eventually he avoids by devoting four stanzas to reflection."<sup>66</sup> This interpretation seems to be more convincing than the traditional ones.

Another contemporary scholar has accepted this interpretation of *manne* as reflection. He says, "*manne* (or *mannai*) in Punjabi means believing and commentator has given this meaning to the word wherever it occurs in *Japuji*. As a matter of fact, *manne* is only one of the terms in the triune of *śravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*, which since ancient times has meant study, reflection and devotional attitude."<sup>67</sup>

65. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.96.

66. *Ibid*, pp.92-93.

67. Sohan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.34.

The second step of knowledge through *manne* is the same as the second step of knowledge which is described in the later part of *Japuji* in *Saram Khand*. As Sohan Singh says, "in knowledge one goes out to seek more and more to taste of His Creation in all its wondrous variety. In contrast to this, the next stage is that of withdrawing into one's inner life in order to reflect on what knowledge has given us, to put into its proper form and relationship all the material acquired by us in the Region of Knowledge."<sup>68</sup> The knowledge which we acquire through reason or reflection is knowledge of relations. It goes step by step from the lower level to the higher level and presents the Reality as a system of whole. It presents a coherent picture of Reality.

## Dhyān (Contemplation)

Now, after '*sunīai*' and '*manne*', we come to the third stage of knowledge which is called *dhyān* and which has been referred to by a scholar as single-minded contemplation.<sup>69</sup> This third stage of knowledge, in Hindu philosophy is called *nididhyāsana* which has its root in Sanskrit language.<sup>70</sup> It means profound and repeated meditation.<sup>71</sup> As observed in the *Brahma Sutra*, "belief should set us on to reflection, *manana*, and contemplation, *nididhyāsana*, which results in *atma-darsana* or vision of the self."<sup>72</sup> As mentioned above, *dhyān*, contemplation, is the highest stage in the process of knowledge and results in purest knowledge. One arrives at the truth through first two stages that is '*sunīai*' and '*mannai*' and through contemplation that truth continuously reaches this highest stage. Contemplation, in the mystical sense, is knowledge consisting in the partial or complete identification of the knower with the object of knowledge with the consequent loss of his own individuality. In Hugo of St. Victor (1096—1141), contemplation is the third and highest stage of

68. *Ibid*, p.34.

69. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.91.

70. Vaman Shiv Ram Apte, *op.cit.*, p.525.

71. M. M. Williams, *op.cit.*, p.549.

72. The *Brahma Sutra*, p.116.



knowledge of which *cogitatio* and *meditatio* are the two earlier levels. In recent epistemology contemplation is knowledge of an object in contrast to enjoyment which is the mind's direct awareness.<sup>73</sup> So it is clear from the above description of contemplation that it is related with knowledge. It would be quite interesting to note that in the twelfth century the Western thinkers also considered it to be the third stage of knowledge. In *Vedānta*, difference has been made between *dhyān* and *nididhyāsana*. *Dhyān* has been used in the sense of contemplation. *Nididhyāsana* is the third stage of knowledge in line with *śravana* and *manana*. "The triple course, consisting of *śravana*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*, is the direct approach to *nirguna Brahman* with no mediating means. It is a steep, straight way without any curve or slope or resting place." It is to be noted that the term '*nididhyāsana*' in this context does not mean the kind of meditation (*dhyāna*) that is usually practised with a symbol. It is more like a process of knowledge or right apprehension.<sup>74</sup> In the *Upaniṣadic* text, the sage Yajnavalkya, while prescribing the three-fold method of self-realization has substituted the word '*viñāna*' (right apprehension) for '*nididhyāsana*' and the purpose of this substitution is described by Sureśvaracarya in his '*vārtika*' as, "to indicate that *nididhyāsana* is used here not in the usual sense of meditation (*dhyāna*) but in a special sense of right apprehension or knowledge (*viñāna*) which, unlike meditation (*dhyāna*), depends on the nature of thing known rather than on the knower's mind."<sup>75</sup> It is further told that, "*dhyāna* or *upāsana* (meditation with the help of a symbol) which is distinct from *nididhyāsana*, is the way for the less qualified aspirants."<sup>76</sup>

In *Japuji* when the seeker realizes the third stage of knowledge i.e. *dhyān*, he is known as *panch*.<sup>77</sup> As pointed out by one scholar, this

73. *The Dictionary of Philosophy*, p.65.

74. Swami Satparkasananda, *op.cit.*, p.288.

75. *Ibid*, p.288.

76. *Ibid*, p.290.

77. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.3.

*panch parvān panch pardhānu pancha kā gur eku dhīān*

stage of knowledge, "indicates both hearing and reflection. We find that the term '*dhyān*' (contemplation) occurs even while the Guru discusses the various aspects of knowledge by hearing. The need to synthesize knowledge is thus stressed by Guru Nanak through this third aspect of knowledge. The synthesis, thus, is a constituent of the knowledge itself."<sup>78</sup> The seeker of knowledge here perceives the Truth as a coherent whole. He perceives the Reality as a harmonious unit or unitary whole. As pointed out by another Sikh scholar, "the ensuing four stanzas give the picture of creation and the creator which emerges as a result of reflection. In its turn the stanzas clear the way for the next stage of the correct attitude which is to be cultivated in order to receive His Grace."<sup>79</sup> The Guru holds that only a *panch* is able to achieve His vision who reaches this stage through hearing and reflection.

Guru Nanak<sup>80</sup> has given a beautiful simile to make it clear that knowledge ripens through contemplation. One has the purest form of Truth in contemplation which comes through His Grace. Here, the *dharma* has been compared to a flower and knowledge is its fruit which ripens in contemplation.

Guru Nanak, has further mentioned the term *dhyan* (contemplation) with *giān* (knowledge).<sup>81</sup> Contemplation being the climax in the process of knowledge, the knowledge obtained at this stage is very deep and consistent. The object of knowledge remains before the seeker and he is intensely conscious of the object of

78. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.91.

79. Sohan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.41.

80. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.147.

Nānak gurū santokhu rukhu dharamu phulu phalu giān.  
ras rasīā hariā sadā pakai karami dhīān.

81. *Ibid*, p.355.

giānu jānēū dhīānu kuspātī.



knowledge.

In the fourteenth stanza<sup>82</sup> of the *var* six, Bhai Gurdas mentions that the minds of the awakened are illumined by Divine Light. They contemplate and have discerning knowledge of the Real. First they hear the *śabad* and then reflect upon what they have heard, and then contemplate on it. In contemplation, they reach the stage of discerning the higher Truth. Bhai Gurdas<sup>83</sup> further holds that *śabad* is the Guru in Sikhism and that Sikhism is the unique way to spiritual realization. In Sikhism, Guru is the disciple and the disciple is the Guru as there is first a tree, then fruit, then again a tree from that fruit. Bhai Gurdas has compared the Sikh way (*gurmat jugat*) of *gīān*, *dhyān* and *simran* with *kūnj*, *kuram*, and *hans*. *Kunj* is generally associated with *simran*, *kuram* for *dhyān* and *hans* for *gīān* or discerning knowledge.

Bhai Gurdas<sup>84</sup> further says that one should contemplate on the self as one sees himself in a mirror because the Highest Reality is in the self. Only a God-conscious man can enable others to see that *pūran-brahman* is residing in the self. He further relates<sup>85</sup> that a *Gursikh* does not remain in bondage through contemplation. He obtains the knowledge of the cosmos but does not become egoistic. Through contemplation on *Brahman*,<sup>86</sup> a God-conscious man removes his doubt and duality.

According to Bhai Gurdas<sup>87</sup> in contemplation the seeker realizes the highest form of knowledge, the revelation of the Real. Guru Nanak

82. *Ibid*, p.68.

*parbrahmu pūran brahmu brahmu bibekī dhīānu dharande.*

83. *Ibid*, p.81.

*gīānu dhīānu simranu jugati kūnj kuram hans vans navelā.*

84. *Ibid*, p.93.

*darpani vāng dhīānu dhari āpu āp nihālai.*

85. *Ibid*, p.118.

*gīān dhīān simrani sadā satguru sikhu rakhai.....*

86. *Ibid*, p.210.

*gurmukhi brahm dhīānu dubidhā khoīai.*

87. *Ibid*, p.316.

*gīānu dhīān simran jugati gurmati mili gur pūra....*

himself received this knowledge and then being the witness of that Truth he got emancipation and also emancipated the others. The result was one single *gurmat path* for all the four *varnas* where all are regarded as equal participants in seeking the Highest Truth.

We shall now proceed to the second part of this chapter where we shall analyse *hukam* as the rational substratum of the universe. The uniformity of nature and the causal law may be seen as the important aspect of Reality which *inter alia*, are also seen as the formal grounds of induction to the first part of the chapter. We had seen the nature and scope of material grounds of the induction process the *sunīai* as a valid source of perceptual and communicated knowledge. Our epistemological quest now takes us to look at the phenomena of nature very deeply, so as to discover the more general laws. This, in turn, may enable us to discern the rational ground of all being.

## PART II

### Hukam

*Hukam* is an Arabic word, and, as a noun, is used for 'order'. It has been used in different grammatical forms in the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as '*hukamao, hukmāvai, hukmū, hukmī, hukmu, hukme, hukmai* and *hukmao*'. But the concept remains the same in all these usages. The *hukam* seems to be used for the natural system or the coherent whole, which is perceived as an orderly cosmos. It is used for "exercising authority, commanding, command, dominion, control, direction, influence, efficiency; and article of faith; proposition, relation, wisdom and knowledge."<sup>88</sup>

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88. Staingrass, F., *A Comprehensive Persian English Dictionary*, (New Delhi, Oriental Books reprint corporation, 54 Rani Jhansi Road, first edition, 1973), p.426.



It has been used in the *Qu'ran*, but the sense in which it has been used as a concept in Sikhism, is not taken as such from Islam. According to a scholar, "the word *hukam*, which possess a particular significance in the thought of Guru Nanak is certainly an Arabic word but the concept which it expresses is not a borrowing from Islam."<sup>89</sup> According to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, *hukam* appears to be used for the divine, or the higher order, reason. It leads us to the knowledge of causal relationship in nature. Here is orderliness in nature. In nature things are very cordially related. To understand this relatedness and coherence is to understand *hukam*.

It is difficult to find an English word to very exactly represent *hukam* like Plotinus's *nous*. As a scholar has observed, "the standard dictionary translation of '*nous*' is 'mind', but this does not have the correct connotations, particularly when the word is used in a religious philosophy."<sup>90</sup> If '*nous*' is translated as 'spirit', as Dean Inge does, it leaves out the intellectual element which was important in all Greek religious philosophy after Pythagoras. According to a scholar, "it was this intellectual element in Plato's religion that led Christians to identify Christ with the Logos. Logos should be translated 'reason' in this connection; this prevents us from using 'reason' as the translation of '*nous*'. I shall use the word *nous* untranslated."<sup>91</sup> Similar is the case with '*hukam*' in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. In Sikhism one scholar has termed *hukam* as 'law' or 'rule.'<sup>92</sup> To support this, *hukam* is said to be certain (*atal*) and it is held that everything is happening in the world in accordance with it, and it alone decides who is low or high. *Hukam* is the rule which determines the effect, action and fruit.<sup>93</sup> This

89. Macleod, W.H., *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, (Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1968), p.159.

90. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1954), p.312.

91. *Ibid*, p.313.

92. Taran Singh, *Japu Darshan Didar*, (Amritsar, Faqir Singh and Sons), p.42.

93. *Ibid*, p.46.



one seems very simple interpretation of *hukam*. Another scholar has translated *hukam* in more than one way specially in context of *Japuji* as God's will, the eternal immutable, and universal laws of nature, divine decrees.<sup>94</sup> It has also been translated as 'Will of God' and the 'Writ of God.'<sup>95</sup>

One Western scholar has described *hukam* as Divine Order but admits that even the word Divine order does not express the concept of *hukam* in its full perfection.<sup>96</sup> According to Avtar Singh, 'hukam' as universal will (or divine will) can be understood to operate in two ways. It may be taken to operate as external to self as "Thou shalt do this ..." as laid down in a series of commandments in scriptures. But in another and proper sense—in Sikhism—this *hukam* or will may be understood to operate as internal to self."<sup>97</sup> The word divine reason seems most proper word for *hukam* because it is not like authoritarian external order. It is within the man. So it seems more proper like Plotinus's *nous* to remain untranslated and to be written as *hukam*, because no other word may convey the proper sense as is contained in the word *hukam* in Sikhism. It is Divine will which includes knowledge and that knowledge is reached through reason. So it may be called Divine Reason.

Guru Nanak has referred to *hukam* as the potent factor for the removal of ignorance and falsehood.<sup>98</sup> Ignorance, here, is described as '*kūrai pālī*' (the wall of falsehood). In answer to a question posed by Guru Nanak as to how this wall of falsehood can be demolished, he himself later says that it can be done, the falsehood and ignorance can be removed through *hukam*. It, therefore, appears that *hukam* is not conceived by Guru Nanak entirely in conative terms. Guru Nanak has,

94. Sharad Chandra Verma, *Guru Nanak and the Logos of Divine Manifestation*, (Delhi, Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, 1967), p.396.

95. Gopal Singh Dardi, *op.cit.*, (Vol.I), p.1.

96. W. H. Mcleod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, p.201.

97. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, pp.30-31.

98. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.1.

kiv sachīārā hovīai kiv kūrhāi tutai pālī  
hukamī rajāi chalnā Nanak likhiā nālī.



in the above hymn, established a polarity of *hukam* with ignorance. The *hukam* has thus a clearly cognitive element. The *hukam* is neither blind nor devoid of cosmic cognitive element. It explains the precise and accurate nature of *hukam*. It also hints at its rational nature. When *hukam* is said to be written 'within' (*likhiā nāli*) the self, it is also seen as the principle of illumination and knowledge.

It has been emphasized by the Gurus that knowledge is realized by knowing the rational nature of the universe.<sup>99</sup> The seeker is, time and again, reminded that the universe operates according to certain laws. The mathematical accuracy with which the events take place in nature display rational character. Here reason and the causal accuracy appears to suggest that mathematics is the grammar of nature. The knowledge, or the empirical version of it in sciences, discover the ever on-going causal relation in various elements in the cosmos. The realization of knowledge beginning with awareness of the *hukam*,<sup>100</sup> thus, appears to be the first step of wonder necessary for any sustained journey to the deeper and meaningful knowledge. It beacons the self to perceive the orderliness and rational nature of the cosmos and also sustains it through the levels of higher knowledge. It thus perceives of 'what is' to 'why is'. The concept of *hukam* is, therefore, intimately connected with the idea of reason.

This idea is further stressed by Guru Nanak in *Sri Rāg*.<sup>101</sup> *Hukām* is the sustaining principle of the universe. Through *hukam* is created every thing and every work is going on through *hukam*. There are two opposing things in the world, one is to be subject to death time and again, second is to be merged in the Ultimate Truth. These are the two sides of the same Reality. All this happens according to *hukam*.

99. *Ibid*, M.1, p.7.

100. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1.

*hukamī hovani ākār hukamu na kahia jāi.*  
*hukamī hovani jā hukamī milai vadiai.*

101. *Ibid*, M.1, p.55.

*hukamī sabhe ūpajahi hukamī kār kamāhi.*  
*hukamī kalai vasi hai hukamī sāchi smāhi.*



Every thing in nature is going on according to set principles. Nothing is unprincipled. *Hukam* is the governing principle.

Like Plotinus's *nous*, *hukam* of Sikhism is the manifestation of one, single Reality. As to understand one, it is needed to see '*nous*', similarly to understand Him, to reach Him one should know *hukam*. *Nous*, we are told, is the image of the one; it is engendered because the one, in its self-quest, has vision, this seeing is *nous*. This is difficult conception. A Being without parts, Plotinus says, may know itself; in this case, the seer and the seen are one. In God, who is conceived, as by Plato, on the analogy of the sun, the light-giver and what is lit are the same. Pursuing the analogy, *nous* may be considered as the light by which the One sees itself.<sup>102</sup>

<sup>103</sup> There are seeming contradictions in the world. The *mat* (mind) of man has been compared with a bird which, according to its deeds, sometimes becomes good and sometimes bad. Sometimes it goes to the higher things, sometimes to lower ones and then is attuned to the Highest level of Truth. All this seeming contradiction is according to a system. It is a manifestation of Divine *hukam*. So, when we understand the *hukam*, we come closer to Truth. This idea is further clarified by Guru Nanak in *Rāg Asā*.<sup>104</sup> Man is separated from Truth when he does not realize the *hukam*. When he realizes the divine Reason, the *hukam* he is in tune with the highest Truth. Truth is attained by realizing His *hukam*. The true *vairāg* consists in realizing the *hukam*. The seeker should realize that man comes into this world through *hukam*. Everything is happening in this world in a divine plan. When the seeker knows this truth he realizes His *hukam* and gets

102. Bertrand Russell, *op.cit.*, p.313.

103. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.148.

*Mati pankherū kīratu sāthi kab uttam kab mīch.*

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*Nānak hukami chalaīai sāhib lagī rīti.*

104. *Ibid*, M.1, p.419.

*hukamī vajahu likhāi āiā jānīai.*

*lāhā palai pāi hukamu sinjānīai.*



wisdom. Through Truth he attains the True One, the highest Reality. As is observed by Plotinus, "those divinely possessed and inspired have at least the knowledge that they hold some greater thing within them, but we know too, that other, know that it is one of these . . . but a nobler principle than anything we know as Being; fuller and greater; above reason; mind and feeling, conferring these powers, not to be confounded with them."<sup>105</sup>

The functioning of this divine reason or principle which is called *hukam* is very clearly and immediately perceptible in the governance of the structure of the physical universe in a mathematical accuracy. But it is not limited to the physical sphere only. It also extends to the moral aspect of this universe in the form of the law of *karma*. Nothing is happening out of *hukam*. Everything is under *hukam*., the relatedness of *hukam* and law of *karma* is called in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* '*hukam snjogi*'. *Hukam* is harmony, coherence and to live in *hukam* is to live in harmony which leads to the perception of highest truth. Disharmony leads to the circle of birth and death. As held by Guru Nanak,<sup>106</sup> those who perceive the *hukam* have no hindrances, no woes. To be content in Lord's *Nām* is true service to Him. This is to realize *hukam*. Such persons are treasured by God. Those who do not realize the *hukam* are led to falsehood. Such a person who realizes *hukam* within his self also realizes the Supreme Self. This realization leads to *amritphal*. God is the Tree of 'nectar' which fructifies in nectar. Those who taste the fruit of nectar are inebriated with truth. They are relieved of doubt and separation. Man comes into this world due to his deeds in *hukam*, so he should live in *hukam*.

105. Bertrand Russell, *op.cit.*, p.313.

106. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.421.

Hukami rajāi jo chalai so pavai khajānai.

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Hukami snjogi āiā chalu sadā rajāi.

Guru Arjan Dev holds in *Sukhmani*<sup>107</sup> that the *hukam* is the invisible sustaining principle of this universe. God is the cause and creator of this universe who creates and destroys everything through *hukam*.

Everything comes into existence through *hukam* and the ultimate abode of all creation is the *hukam*. So all creation merges into the *hukam* in the end. The Guru further expresses<sup>108</sup> that this coming and going into the world is in *hukam*.

The *hukam* in Sikhism can be compared to the concept of *ṛta* in the *Vedic* mantras. "*Ṛta* originally meant, the established route of the world, of the sun, moon and stars, morning and evening, day and night. Gradually, it became the path of morality to be followed by man and the law of righteousness observed even by gods."<sup>109</sup> The *Vedic* gods are considered the maintainers of the cosmic order and the upholders of moral law. For example, *Mitra* and *Varuna* are considered the "joint-keepers of the *ṛta* and forgivers of sin."<sup>110</sup> At another place a prayer has been done to god *Indra* to keep the followers on right path, "O *Indra*, lead us on the path of *ṛta*, on the right path over all evils."<sup>111</sup> Due to *ṛta*, the universe is a cosmos not a chaos, but the *hukam* of Sikhism is directly related with God. He is the upholder of *hukam* and is called *hukamī*. There is no mediating agency between the *hukamī* and the seeker. In *Vedic* thought, it is nowhere stressed that to know gods man should know *ṛta*. But in Sikhism, it is held that to reach Him, to apprehend the Truth, man should have an insight into His *hukam*. To know *hukam* and to follow *hukam* is the pre-condition to reach the *hukamī*. The conception of *hukam* does not shift from the

107. *Ibid*, M.5, p.297.

Hukme dhāri adhar rahāvai, hukamai upajai hukami smavai.

Hukame ūch nīch biohār.....

108. *Ibid*, M.5, p.885.

ihu tau rachanu rachīā kartari.

āvat jāvat hukami apāri.

109. Radhakrishnan, S., *Indian Philosophy* (Vol.1), p.79.

110. *Ibid*, p.80.

111. *Ibid*, p.80.



physical to the moral sphere. The physical universe as well as moral order are working together under *hukam*. Nothing is out of it. Due to this, the world is not a chaos, the blind fury of chance and element. It is an ordered whole, the working of a harmonious purpose.

## Uniformity of Nature

As mentioned in the concept of *hukam*, according to the Gurus, knowledge is realized by comprehending the rational nature of the universe. According to the Gurus, nothing happens in the universe in a haphazard manner. Nature operates according to set laws. The events take place in nature with the mathematical accuracy which displays the rational character of the nature. Whatever happens in nature is causal, nothing is casual. This is called the law of the uniformity of nature, which has been considered as a very important ground for the inductive reasoning. First, we will have a brief discussion on the law of the uniformity of nature and causal laws which have been considered very important in inductive logic as well as in sciences also. There are some assumptions or grounds on the basis of which the logical induction is made. According to one scholar, "it seems clear that logical induction, whether employed in every day life, in law, or in science, makes a number of assumptions. To some extent, the theory of induction that seems convincing to one depends upon the theory of reality or metaphysics one holds."<sup>112</sup>

According to John Patrick Day, the functions to be performed by the inductive philosophy are considered mainly two. "First, to discover and formulate a ground such that, if it is true, or probable and a certain minor premises is true, then a certain induction logically must

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112. Luther Evans D. and others, *Elements of Logic*, (Dubuque Iowa, W.M.C. Brown Company, 1957), p.153.

be true or probable.”<sup>113</sup>

The principle of the uniformity of nature is considered a probable ground of inductive reasoning. It is very important principle or ground of reasoning because, “it is distinguishing mark of such grounds that they serve as major premises for very many, even all inductions, and consequently are of very wide scope.”<sup>114</sup> This is the very common interpretation of the principle of the uniformity of nature. Hume mentioned as, “that principle, that instances, of which we have had no experience, must resemble those, of which we have had experience, and that the course of nature continuous always uniformly the same.”<sup>115</sup> A rationalist, Johnson, has described it as “what can be predicated of all examined members of a class, can be predicated, with a higher or lower degree of probability, of all members of the class.”<sup>116</sup> The important difference which Johnson has made from Hume is that of ‘probably’ from ‘certainly.’

So after discussing the views of all these philosophers the scholar has interpreted the principle of the ‘Uniformity of Nature’ as, “Nature is uniform means that the universe is homogeneous or all of a piece in some respects, since there are uniformities of laws, not merely in, but of nature; universal laws which, it will be remembered, can be proportional or statistical as well as universal in the sense of ‘universal’.”<sup>117</sup>

Guru Nanak has interpreted the principle of the uniformity of nature through the concept of *hukam*. The right understanding of

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113. John Patrick Day, *Inductive Probability*, (edited by A.J. Ayer, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, first edition, 1961), pp.181-82.

114. *Ibid*, p.183.

115. *Ibid*, p.184.

116. *Ibid*, p.184.

117. *Ibid*, p.185.



*hukam*<sup>118</sup> reveals an orderliness in nature which is knowable. If one penetrates deep, into it one can apprehend that the universe, its living beings, their excellences, miseries, happinesses all come into existence according to the uniform law of nature which is based on *hukam*. This has been further explained by the concept of *qudrat*, according to which all seemingly different appearances are produced by the same cause which has been explained as '*terī qudrat*'. Some scholars have interpreted it as 'His Power.'<sup>119</sup> It is through His *hukam* that everything in nature is working in a rational pattern. The laws of nature are rational. They are not fortuitous. Nothing is accidental or by chance.<sup>120</sup> And there is causal uniformity which has been expressed through the concepts such as *hukam*, *qudrat* and *bhai*. As held by the fourth Guru,<sup>121</sup> God is the creator of everything such as day and night and He reveals Himself through His *qudrat* in nature. Guru Arjan Dev<sup>122</sup> also avers that He is behind the laws and processes of nature. Through nature he establishes and de-establishes things. Whatever is created is His creation. He is the cause of all creation and His *hukam* is the unifying rational principle behind it.

## Śabad

The concept of *sunīai*, *manne* and *dhyān* has two aspects. In one aspect it is related with the hearing, reflection and contemplation of perceptual knowledge. The second aspect of it is related with the hearing, reflection and contemplation of *śabad*. Now we will discuss

118. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.1.

*hukamī hovani ākār hukamu na kahiā jāi.*

119. Gopal Singh Dardi, translator, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, (Chandigarh, World University Press, 1978), p.457.

120. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.464.

*qudrati disai qudrati sunīai qudrati bhau sukh sārū.*

*Nānak hukamai andari vekhai vartai tāko tāku.*

121. *Ibid*, M.4, p.313.

*sachu sachā qudrati jānīai dinu rāti jini banāia*

122. *Ibid*, M.5, p.915.

the meaning of *śabda* in Sikhism.

*Śabda* is a noun in Sanskrit language. It means sound, noise, voice, tone, note, etc.<sup>123</sup> It is held that *śabda*, in its widest sense, denotes sound, articulate and inarticulate, called *varṇa* and *dhvani*, respectively.<sup>124</sup> Almost all the six systems of Indian thought except Vaiśeṣika consider *śabda* as one of the *pramāṇas* which is called verbal testimony or authority in English. *Śabda* as a means of valid knowledge or *pramāṇa* is called *śabda pramāṇa*. In this context, *śabda* means, "an articulate sound, that is, a word with meaning, and applies to a verbal expression consisting of one or more words. It may be uttered or written. The essential part of word or a combination of words is its meaning. Every word is a symbol of a thought or an idea".<sup>125</sup> Traditionally, the *śabda-pramāṇa* is also *āpta-vākya* that is the statement of trustworthy person or *āgama* that is authentic word. A statement is a declaration in speech or writing which consists of one or more sentences.

A sentence which is a unit of the *śabda-pramāṇa* has been defined as, "a means of valid knowledge in which the relation (among the meanings of the words) that is the object of its intention is not contradicted, by any other means of valid knowledge."<sup>126</sup> It means that a sentence is true and *śabda-pramāṇa* not because it is an *āpta-vākya* or *āgama* but because the knowledge provided by it is uncontradicted.

*Śabda* as a means of transmitting valid knowledge is most potent because of its wider scope. Perceptual knowledge has a very limited scope because our senses can provide us the knowledge of only those objects which are presented to them. The knowledge for those which are beyond the range of senses we depend either on inference or on testimony. Our inferential knowledge although has a much wider

123. Monier Monier Williams, *op.cit.*, 'Śabda'

124. Swami Satprakashānanda, *Methods of Knowledge*, p.173.

125. *Ibid*, p.173.

126. *Ibid*, pp.173-74.



scope than perceptual knowledge but still it has limited scope because only that can be inferred, " what has been previously observed to be invariably related to something that is being perceived. And since the scope of our personal experience is limited, it is the words of the reliable persons such as know truly and communicate correctly that serve as our main source of knowledge."<sup>127</sup>

Another meaning *śabad* implies is in the form of 'Logos'. 'Logos' is a Greek term for the Word. *Logos* is an ancient term with many uses, generally fulfilled by other words in modern languages. Heraclitus held an obscure *logos* doctrine, in which *logos* appears as a kind of non-human intelligence that organizes the discreet elements in the world into a coherent whole. The use of the word by the Sophists approaches the modern uses of its derivatives 'logic' and 'logical'; for them *logos* could mean an argument, or the content of an argument. The Stoics equated it with that sort of God who is the supposed source of all the rationality in the universe. The *logos* with which most modern people are familiar appears in the opening words of St. John's gospel where it is equated with Jesus Christ in his creative and redemptive aspect.<sup>128</sup>

An Indian scholar, while discussing the philosophy of Guru Nanak has held that the word *logos* is near equivalent to Guru Nanak's *śabad* and has held that, "conveying apart from its accepted meaning of thought and the word, a material and efficient cause and involving an ultimate and active principle of thought-word as an all-inclusive Monad, as a creator whole, gestalt of "*naturanaturata*" (a term used by Spinoza)."<sup>129</sup>

The Guru have used the *sabad* in many different meanings in different contexts. One meaning among them can be said to be 'logos'. *Sabad* has been used for scripture also. *Sabad* has also used in the

127. *Ibid*, p.175.

128. Antony Flew, *op.cit.*, p.199. 'Logos'

129. Sharad Chandra Verma, *op.cit.*, p.63.



sense of *pramāṇa*, a source of knowledge. According to Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, *sabad* in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* implies different meanings as Creator, Divine *Hukam* revealed through *Satgurū*, *Dharma*, *Gurmantar*, and Scripture.<sup>130</sup> *Śabad* has been used in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* in different grammatical forms as *śabad*, *śabdah*, *śabadi*, *śabadi*, *śabadu*, *śabade*, *śabadai*, and *śabado*. But these different forms do not make any conceptual differences.

One scholar has referred to the stanza in *Japuji* containing the shaping of the *śabad* as its quintessence, "It is thus an epitome of the Teacher's doctrine as expressed in *Japuji*."<sup>131</sup> Here the *śabad* is musical sound which can be enjoyed through ears. In Indian *yoga* systems, it is held that *Brahman* resides in the universe as a *śabda*. This *śabda* which is called *anahat śabda* can be heard as a music (*nād*) through *yogic* meditation when *kundlinī* is awakened and the way of *sushumanā* is opened.<sup>132</sup> As we have seen in earlier stanza, Guru has described it as *gīān-mārag* in *Japuji*. Man can awake his inner mind while following this path and has the awareness of the *śabad* in his inner mind. He can listen to the highest music which gets awakened in his mind through this knowledge.

*Śabad* is the knowledge which instructs the man for truthful living. Through *śabad* man gets rid of all types of ignorance which becomes the cause of his separation from ultimate Truth and cycle of birth and death. Through *śabad* his mind and body both are brightened. It is said, "that is a luminous spiritual and in its native action a direct supermental force of knowledge, *jyotih*, not our modified and derivative mental light, *prakāśa*. That is the light and bliss of widest self-existence, spontaneous self-knowledge, intimate universal identity, deepest self-inter change. . . That light is full of a luminous spiritual will and there is no gulf or disparateness between its

130. Bhai Kahan Singh, *Gurmat Martand*, (Vol.1), (Amritsar, Shiromani Gurdwara Parbhandak Committee), p.131.

131. Sohan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.104.

132. Rajbali Pandey, *op.cit.*, p.29.



knowledge, and its action.”<sup>133</sup> According to the Gurus, the *sabad* helps the seeker in gaining knowledge in contemplation and in following the way of religion. The *sabad* has also been reviewed as the guiding force. When *sabad* becomes the guiding force for man it becomes Guru.<sup>134</sup> Through *sabad* man's action and will are refined.<sup>135</sup> They become as action and will of Guru, they become conated with Guru's will. *Sabad* is the medium to understand the higher truths as divine *hukam*.<sup>136</sup>

*Sabad*<sup>137</sup> as the expression of Reality is operative in every body. Reality is true word. This truth is realized through His Grace, when he bestows Grace, man is attuned to truth which is the *sabad*. In Sikhism, the *sabad* is the Guru and the Guru is the *sabad*. Man is to learn the spiritual path from the Guru, who reveals the *sabad* in the form of *Gurbani* which eventually became the Guru.

According to Guru Amardas, the *gursabad* is *amrit* (nectar)<sup>138</sup> which satiates all passions and hungers which are the hindrances in the knowledge of Reality. According to Guru Arjan, the Reality is that God who resides everywhere. When the seeker attains Him he hears within himself musical sound *sabad*.<sup>139</sup>

So we have seen that in Sikhism, true *sabad* has been used in more than one sense. The *sabad* is the expression of the Reality. It resides within the human mind as a Reality. The *sabad* is the means of knowledge of the highest Truth, the Truth is attained through reflection

133. Sri Aurobindo, *Essays on Gita*, p.451.

134. Kahan Singh Nabha, *Gurmat Martand*, p.384

135. *Ibid*, p.438.

136. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.940.

pūre gur te sāchu kamāvai gati miti sabade pāi.

137. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1275.

chahudisi hukamu vartai prabh terā chahudisi nāu patāln.

sabh mahi sabadu vartai prabh sāchā karam milai baiāln.

138. *Ibid*, M.3, p.850.

gur kā sabadu anmritu hai sabh trisanā bhūkh gavāe.

139. *Ibid*, M.5, p.621.

sarab thān kā rājā. tah anhad sabad agājā.

and contemplation on the *śabad*. The intuitive experience of Reality is expressed in the *śabad*. When the seeker has realized the Reality within, the *śabad* rings in his mind as *anhad-nād*. But to realize this *anhad-nād* according to Sikhism, man does not need to follow the path of *yogic* exercises as held by some Indian schools. He needs to dispel *haumai* and *māyā* due to which he is separated from the Reality. This ignorance has been termed as '*kūre pāli*', the wall of falsehood, in *Japuji*. Again, this is removed through reflection and contemplation on the *śabad* which is to be received from the Guru. In Sikhism, the *śabad* is Guru.

## Sach (Truth)

We have discussed the concept of *śabad* in Sikhism in which we have seen that *śabad* is the only means of knowledge of the highest Reality, the Truth. Now we will discuss the concept of *sach*. *Sach* is the Punjabi form of the Sanskrit word *sat*, which is a noun and its root in Sanskrit language is *asi*. The meanings which the word implies are: being, existing, occurring, happening, being present etc.<sup>140</sup> Its adjective is *satya*.<sup>141</sup> In *Hindu Dharm Kosh*, *satya* has been held as that which remains the same in the three divisions of time that is past, present and future.<sup>142</sup>

*Sach* is translated as Truth in English language. What is Truth? In answer to this question, it is held by a scholar that it can be answered only, "If we allow ourselves two metaphysical assumptions . . . first, that there are states of affairs, some of which occur or obtain and some of which do not occur or obtain; and second, that there are attributes or properties, some of which are exemplified or instantiated and some of which are not exemplified or instantiated."<sup>143</sup>

140. M.M. Williams, *op.cit.*, 'asi', p.1134.

141. Shiv Ram Apte, '*satya*', p.1063.

142. Rajbali Pandey, *op.cit.*, p.650.

143. Roderick M. Chisholm, *Theory of Knowledge*, (New Delhi, Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, second edition, 1977), p.87.



The 'propositions' have been considered by the same scholar as a sub-species of states of affairs. The propositions are "those states of affairs, namely, which are necessarily such that either they always obtain or they never obtain."<sup>144</sup> It is observed that a proposition, might be said, "Is true, if and only if it obtains. And it is false if and only if it does not obtain."<sup>145</sup> So 'Truth' is the property of a proposition. Every proposition is such that either it is true or false and no proposition can have both the properties of true and false. According to Bertrand Russell, "truth is a property of beliefs, and derivatively of sentences which express belief. Truth consists in a certain relation between a belief and one or more facts other than the belief. When this relation is absent, the belief is false."<sup>146</sup> It is further observed that whether some one's belief is, "true depends upon a fact which may remain outside his experience."<sup>147</sup> As far as a sentence is concerned, "the significance consists in the description of the fact, which, if it exists, will make the sentence true."<sup>148</sup> If the description of the sentence describes a fact, it is 'true,' if it does not describe a fact, it is false.

There are three theories of truth which are known as: correspondence theory of truth, pragmatic theory of truth and coherence theory of truth which we will discuss in brief. First we will take the correspondence theory of truth.

### (a) Correspondence Theory of Truth

According to this theory, a proposition judged or a judgement, is true if there is a fact corresponding to it, false if not. On the surface level, common sense seems to support correspondence theory.

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144. *Ibid*, p.87.

145. *Ibid*, p.88.

146. Bertrand Russell, *op.cit.*, pp.164-65.

147. *Ibid*, p.165.

148. *Ibid*, p.166.

According to one observation, "we say that a man's belief is correct if it agrees, or conforms, or accords or corresponds with the facts, all of the above being phrases suggesting that truth is (a) a relation of some kind between what a man judges, on the one hand, and the facts of the case, on the other; and (b) a relation of a special sort, which we try to indicate by using names such as 'agree', correspond, etc."<sup>149</sup>

## **(b) Pragmatic Criterion of Truth**

According to Dr Schiller, "the forms and connections of the world of our experience are not to be regarded as imposed upon us from without, either by a non-human system of material forces or by a super human system of absolute and eternal ideals, but are rather to be viewed as the outcome of the enduring interests, preferences and needs of ourselves and our ancestors."<sup>150</sup> So, according to him we perceive the world according to the human needs and interests. So, "we must, in short, judge the truth of a theory by the pragmatic criterion of its value in practical life."<sup>151</sup> It implies that the value of a theory lies in the factor whether it conforms to the human needs or not. It is true if and only if it conforms to human needs. If not, then it is false.

James, Dewey and Schiller—all three of them worked at the problem of method from different angles and have arrived at a virtual agreement. For James and Schiller or both, "thought or cognition exists for the sake of action rather than as an end in itself; and for all three the truth of a judgement should be measured and not by an abstract criterion such as consistency or copying of fact, but by the concrete criterions or its practical efficiency to satisfy the needs by which it was generated."<sup>152</sup>

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149. Woozely, A.D., *Theory of Knowledge*, (London, Hutchinson University Library, eighth edition, 1967), p.126.

150. William Pepperell Montague, *op.cit.*, p.136.

151. *Ibid*, p.136.

152. *Ibid*, p.137.



### (c) The Coherence Theory

According to the coherence theory of truth, the truth of a judgement consists in its coherence within a system of a judgement.<sup>153</sup> It means the 'part' is true when it coheres with the whole. The coherence theory of truth forms the part of an idealist system of epistemology and of metaphysics.

According to most recent idealist view of this theory, "reality is a sytem completely ordered and fully intelligible. . . . We may look at the growth of knowledge, individual or social, either as an attempt by our minds to return to union with the things as they are in their ordered wholeness, or the affirmation through our minds of the ordered whole itself. . . . The degree of truth of a particular proposition is to be judged in the first instance by its coherence with experience as a whole, ultimately by its coherence with that further whole, ultimately by the all-comprehensive and fully articulated, in which thought can come to rest".<sup>154</sup> It may be said that it is a relationship holding between the groups of propositions in such a way that a proposition cannot be false if all the other propositions of that group are true. No single proposition is independent of the others. It is held that, "between all the several propositions there exists a mutual entailment such that any one of them is deducible from all the rest, and that no one of them could be true if any of the others were false."<sup>155</sup>

*Sach* has been used in three different meanings in Sikhism. Firstly, as an attribute of Reality. Secondly, as a quality of a proposition which has got the capacity for guiding the conduct.

153. Woozely, A.D., *op.cit.*, p.126.

154. *Ibid*, pp.150-52.

155. *Ibid*, p.152.

Thirdly, *sach* has been referred to as a moral virtue. So it is concerned with the three areas; ontological—with the nature of Reality; epistemological—as a theory of truth or knowledge and ethical—as a moral virtue. Here we are mainly concerned with the 'Truth', in the meaning of Being, the Reality though we will also refer to the other two aspects of *sach*.

As mentioned in the beginning of this section, *sach* is the Punjabi form of the Sanskrit word *satya*, the meaning of which is 'to be' or 'being'. According to an eminent interpreter of Sikhism, the *Prakrit* form of Sanskrit word *satya* is *sachch* and its Punjabi form is *sach*. In *mūlmantra* it is *sati*.<sup>156</sup> Interpreting '*Sati Nām*', in *Mūlmantra*, the same scholar holds that the word '*sati*' here implies the non-dual *sati*. It is above *sat-asat* or *sach-jhuth* dualism and implies the meaning of "a conscious being whose form is truth."<sup>157</sup> Another scholar of Sikhism has interpreted the meaning of the words '*sat*' and '*sachiārā*'. He has analyzed the various interpretations done so far by the scholars of Sikhism. He is of the opinion that the interpretation done by Max Arthur Macauliffe is more authentic.<sup>158</sup> According to him, the interpretation done by Macauliffe of *Mūl Mantra* conveys the meaning of true as 'being' or 'eternal existence.'<sup>159</sup> After giving the views of the various Sikh scholars like Gopal Singh, Sohan Singh, Sodhi Teja Singh etc., the scholar further observes that, "the term *sat* here has the same meaning which *satya* has in *Bhagvata Purāna* where the opening verse is an adoration of the ultimate truth (*parama satya*). . . The essential (*svārūpa*) definitive

156. Bhai Vir Singh, *Santhya Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, Vol.I, (Amritsar, Khalsa Samachar Hall Bazar, November, 1961), p.38.

157. *Ibid*, p.12.

158. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.40.

159. *Ibid*, p.41.

"But from what he quotes for comparison, namely an inscription from a Greek temple, "I am all that was and is and will be", we may infer that perhaps the alternative meanings in his mind were in terms of 'being', or external existence".



nature of God is said to be truth (*satya*).<sup>160</sup>

The interpretation done by this scholar seems to be most agreeable. This finds support from *Brahman Sūtra*, where *sat* has been taken for being.<sup>161</sup> In *Vedānta* system, the qualities of *Brahman*, the ultimate Reality are said to be *sat-cit-anand* that is being, consciousness and bliss. In the *Chhandogya Upaniṣad*, it is held that, "all creatures have their root in the True, they dwell in the True, they rest in the True."<sup>162</sup> And this 'True' is the highest Being.<sup>163</sup> This difference has been very clearly brought about by one of the above mentioned scholars on Sikhism according to whom "in Sikhism the Absolute has been 'conceived as dynamic and viewed functionally.'<sup>164</sup> He is of the opinion that, "It is perhaps due to this inability of mere *sat* as truth to convey this dynamic creativity that Guru Nanak prefers to use *sat nām, karta purkh*."<sup>165</sup> In *Vedānta* system, it is held that the three aspects of the Reality are identical, "Pure existence is consciousness itself and is Bliss itself. They imply one and the same undifferentiated Reality. They are not the aspects or attributes of *Brahman* but its three different appellations indicative of its absolute flawlessness."<sup>166</sup>

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160. *Ibid*, p.42.

161. Radhakrishnan, S., *op.cit.*, p.90.

162. Max Muller, *The Upaniṣads*, (Vol.I), *op.cit.*, p.100.

163. *Ibid*, p.101.

164. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.45.

165. *Ibid*, p.45.

166. Swami Satprakāśhānanda, *op.cit.*, p.246.

*Sach* has also described as having a capacity to guide the conduct of the seeker. According to Guru Nanak, *sach* is the panacea for the ills which afflict man. It washes the mind clean of all the sins.<sup>167</sup> *Sach* as a moral virtue is realized when the seeker disciplines the basic interests and cultivates the angelic aspect of his personality.<sup>168</sup>

*Gurvāk* helps in realizing the Truth. It is a guide, the Pure which illumines the all with its light. Through its light the Reality is shown to man.<sup>169</sup> Such a man is termed as *sachā* (*sachīārā* also). the true one, who is imbued with the Highest Truth, the Ultimate Reality. In Him God's light becomes manifest which leads to the above mentioned results.<sup>170</sup>

In the light of the above discussion about *sach* and its attainment we can say that to be *sachīār* means to realize the unity of the self with the *sach* or the Absolute. The seeker is to attain this unity not only through reflection, contemplation and intuition but through his actions also. He has to discipline his life in the way of the Gurus. As remarked by a Sikh scholar, "the ideal of all this discipline is to realize the pervasiveness of universal spirit in all and this is to be realized not only through gradual expansion of consciousness, but it is also to be effectively translated in the actions of the self."<sup>171</sup> It is through this

167. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.468.

*sachu sabhanā hoi dāru pāp kadhai dhoi.*

168. *Ibid*, M.1, p.463.

*balihāri gur apāne diōhārū sad vār.*

*jīn manas te devate kīe karat na lāgi vār.*

169. *Ibid*, M.1, p.687.

*sansāru rogī nāmu dāru mail lāgai sach binā.*

*gur vāku nirmālū sadā chānanū nit sāchu tīrathū manjanā.*

170. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1112.

*sachu gharū khoji lahe sāchā gur thāmo.*

171. Dr. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.46.



that the concept of the Absolute as *sati nām kartā purakhu*, the dynamic and creative aspect of Reality, as put forth by Guru Nanak, can be understood. That is why the ideal of Truth, according to Sikhism, cannot be attained in seclusion. It is to be attained through the participation in social life. Seclusion leads to escapism from the social responsibilities. But in Sikhism, the *sachīārā* becomes more conscious of his social responsibilities and utilizes his knowledge for the improvement of the human society.<sup>172</sup>

According to the Sikh point of view, all creation and expansion done by the Reality is True. The creator and the creation both are True. So are all the parts of a creative whole.<sup>173</sup> It implies that all is Truth. There is no possibility of wrong and falsehood or evil in the Divine plan. Falsehood or evil exists only from the point of view of finite creatures. But they also have the potentialities of transcending these weaknesses and attain the Truth, the whole. This can be compared with Spinoza's notion that, "In God, who alone is completely real, there is no negation, and therefore the evil is what to us seem sins does not exist when they are viewed as parts of the whole."<sup>174</sup>

In Sikhism *haumai* and *māyā* are the wall of falsehood on the individual and cosmic plane, respectively. They give rise to many passions, like *lobh*, *moh*, *vair* and *virodh*, etc which separate man from the Reality. *Haumai* has been considered a basic malady but in it lies the remedy also. When man recognises the negative role of the *haumai* within him, he can remove it, with the Grace of God.<sup>175</sup> When it is removed, man has the knowledge of Reality and the part is merged in the whole. According to Spinoza also, "the human mind has an

172. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.5, p.269.

Mithiā tan nahi parupkārā.  
mithiā bāsu let bikārā.

173. *Ibid*, M.5, p.1073.

antari bāhari sabh kichhu jānai āpe hi āpi patīja he.

174. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, op.cit., p.594.

175. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.2, p.466.

haumai dīragh rogu hai dārū bhī isu māhi.

adequate knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God but the passions distract and obscure our intellectual vision of the whole."<sup>176</sup> Contemplation on the *śabad* unites the man with the whole. The *sachīar* lives in the *nirmal bhau* only, but not in any other external fear. *Nirmal bhau* is aroused in his experience with God as wonderful Lord, *Waheguru*. When he views the world as expressions of the one Ultimate Being and as the creation of *sat* out of *sat*, he views everything as a part of the whole.

We have now come to the end of the two parts of this chapter. We have noticed how the Sikh Gurus have used the deductive reasoning to demonstrate the theoretical as well as the practical aspects of reason. Our detailed and comparative engagement with the material and the formal ground of induction, has shown that the Gurus have shown the enduring foundations of human knowledge. The divine is not a postulate for denying, it is the assurance of a higher order of coherence as the ground of our knowledge. It reinforces and sustains our effort for more and more, as well as deeper and deeper, knowledge.

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176. Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, op.cit., p.595.



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# **5**

## **NATURE OF REVELATION IN SIKHISM**

**Bānī—Rejection of Avtār vād—Divine  
Manifestation—Phenomenal Manifestation—  
Qudrat—Panentheism Examined—  
Non-Contradiction as a Feature of Reality—  
Viveka**



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## BANĪ (REVELATION)

In the third and fourth chapters we have discussed the nature of reason and the kinds of knowledge and reason in Sikhism. Now we turn to the nature of the revelation in Sikhism. The word *bānī* is the Punjabi version of the word *vāni* in Sanskrit language. In Sanskrit language, the word *vāni* has been defined as, "sound, voice, music, speech, language, words, diction," and "the goddess of speech."<sup>1</sup> Professor Sher Singh has used the words, "*akhar, klām and bānī*."<sup>2</sup>

According to him, this kind of special revelation is understood in two senses. "One is that God communicates His teachings in His own Words and those words are simply repeated by the prophet like a gramophone record. In this notion the prophet simply works as an instrument. The other belief is that God communicates not the words but the context of the words, the knowledge. In both these views, there is generally conveyed the thought of a communication of truth to which man could not attain by his unaided powers. That is to say a knowledge is communicated by God to man which man otherwise could not have possessed."<sup>3</sup> According to him, "there is still another view which is mostly held by the poets and the mystics. According to the view, the mystic unity of the individual self with the Universal Self, in other words, the communion of man with God inspires certain individuals who set forth their experience in the holy books. Thus inspired they arrive at the universal truth. . . The truth which comes like

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1. M.M. Williams, *op.cit.*, 'Vani', p.939

2. Sher Singh, *op.cit.*, p.29.

3. *Ibid*, p.56.



an inspiration out of contract with its surroundings brings with it an assurance that it has been sent from an inner source of divine wisdom, that the individual who has realized it is specially inspired and therefore has his responsibility as a direct medium of communication of divine truth.<sup>4</sup>

Sher Singh is of the opinion that the concept of revelation in Sikhism is limited to the kind of revelation as referred to above. According to him, "the revelation of truth in general—the insight is referred to by the Guru about himself. In this sense, the *Granth* is revealed book."<sup>5</sup>

The view held by Sher Singh does not seem to reflect the conception of revelation in Sikhism. In Sikhism, spiritual communication is conceived to be directly from God and is not moderated by the Guru. And as such *bānī* is a direct revelation. The knowledge and truth communicated through this revelation is traceable to the Divine and not to the body or mind of the Guru. The role of the Guru is that of a mediator and not that of a moderator. Whereas the interpretation of Sher Singh in this regard appears to trace the shaping of revelation to the Guru but its inspiration to the Divine. The inspiration in this case is conceived as unformed or amorphous requiring its formalization by a Guru. This may assign revelation partly to the Guru and not wholly to the Divine. The correct view, as emphasized by the Gurus, appears to be that revelation or *bānī* is traced to the Divine.

According to Guru Nanak, God Himself is the source of *bani*, the primal word. The *bānī* is the way of His manifestation.<sup>6</sup> While

4. *Ibid*, pp.56-7.

5. *Ibid*, p.57.

6. *Shabadarath Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, op.cit., p.7.

describing the stages of spiritual attainment in our long journey to Him in *Japuji*. Guru Nanak holds that at the level or region of the inward orientation, *saram khand*,<sup>7</sup> (which has already been described in this chapter), He reveals Himself in forms (*rup*). Here the Reality is revealed as the harmonious whole. In the region of grace or *karam khand*,<sup>8</sup> the revelation is as power, force, that is the Reality is revealed as such that there is no 'other', all is He Himself. He is revealed to the seeker in His completeness.

Guru Nanak further holds<sup>9</sup> that the recipient of the revelation loses the sense of ignorance and all his doubts vanish.<sup>10</sup> The Guru says<sup>11</sup> that when the seeker meets God, he flows through the nectar word, *bānī*. That the Reality is fully realized in him through revelation. He becomes complete. Guru Nanak further holds<sup>12</sup> that whosoever drinks at the fountain of revelation becomes acceptable in the court of God. After having been blessed by the revealed word, he seeks the vision of the Reality and values it more than the desires for heaven or

7. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.7.  
saram khand kī bānī rūpu.  
tithai ghārhati gharhīai bahutu anūpu.
8. *Ibid*, M.1, p.8.  
karam khand kī bānī joru. tithai horu na koī horu.
9. *Ibid*, M.1, p.8.  
anhad bānī pāiai tah haumai hoi bināsu.
10. *Ibid*, M.1, p.221.  
iku sukhu manīā sahaji milāiā. nirmal bānī bharamu chakāiā.
11. *Ibid*, M.1, p.243.  
satigur melī ta piri rāvi bigasī amrit bānī.
12. *Ibid*, M.1, p.360.  
gur kī sakhī amrit bānī pāvat hī parvānu bhaīā.



deliverances.

Guru Nanak confirms<sup>13</sup> in *Rāg Tilang* that he does not say anything on his own. Whatever he says has been revealed to him by God. He is conveying that knowledge which he has received from the Lord. He conveys this truth to Bhai Lalo at the occasion of Babur's sinful plunder of India and forceful occupation of this land. Guru Nanak further affirms that God<sup>14</sup> reveals Himself through *bānī* in the three regions of the world. By detaching himself from the mundane, he sees the presence of God permeating in all.<sup>15</sup> In that state of mind, the unmanifest becomes manifest. Guru Nanak<sup>16</sup> advises to consider the revelation of True Guru (God) as the only Truth.

In *Rag Bhairō*, Guru Nanak holds<sup>17</sup> that God abides in the soul and the soul abides in God: this is known through the reflection on Guru's word. Through *śabad* the revelation is understood and one's ignorance (*hau*) and sorrows are removed. It is further held<sup>18</sup> that God is to be seen by the eyes in His manifestation (*qudrat*). His revelation is to be heard by the ears and His Name is to be uttered by the mouth. In this way the wealth of glory is completely gathered and the seeker is attuned to God in equipoise.

According to Guru Angad, the *Vedas* have related the myths which make the man to reflect upon the values like good and evil and they taught men that one 'takes' what one 'gives' and according to this

13. *Ibid*, M.1, pp.722-23.

Jaisī mai āvai khasam kī bānī taisarhā kārī gīan veṭ alo.

14. *Ibid*, M.1, p.763.

ravi rahīā jug chārī tribhavan bānī jis kī balrām jīo.

15. *Ibid*, M.1, p.944.

gupati bānī pargatu hoī. Nanak parakhi lae sachu soī.

16. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1028.

satigur kī bānī sati kari mānahu ihu atam rāmai lina he.

17. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1153.

anmrit bānī sabadi pachhāni dukh kātai hau mārā.

18. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1168.

akhi qudrati kannī bānī mukhi ākhanu sachā nāmu.

'give-and-take' man goes into heaven or hell.<sup>19</sup> The *Vedas* have created in man the illusions of high and low and of caste and colour. But the revelation in Sikhism concerns only with the attributes of God. This is revealed through the reflection and contemplation on God. It is uttered by the *Gurmukhs* i.e., Guru-oriented people, realized by the *Gurmukhs* who by God's grace contemplate upon it in their consciousness. So the second Guru has made clear the distinction between the two kinds of revelation of the *Vedas* and Sikhism.

Guru Amardas has used many adjectives with the word *bānī* some of which have been used by Guru Nanak also. These words are *sachhī*, *nirmal*, *anmrit*, *anhat*, *gurmukhi*, *utam*, *uchī*, *rūrhi*, *vāh vāh*, *ikā*, etc. He has also made a distinction between the *sachī bānī* and *kachī bānī*.

According to Guru Amardas, the revelation of the Guru is the Nectar which provides sweetness to life. But there are very rare seekers who taste it. Whosoever tastes it, his mind is illumined with light and he imbibes the great essence of God's love.<sup>20</sup> Guru Amardas holds that God Himself is the creator and doer and cause. He Himself reveals as the Reality (*śabad*) and enshrines that Revelation in the seeker's mind. The Revelation which is Nectar, comes out of *śabad*. The God-oriented man recites the revelation for others to listen.<sup>21</sup> Through the Guru, the *śabad* and its revelation (*bānī*) is uttered otherwise it is unutterable.<sup>22</sup> In *Anand* in *Rāg Rāmkalī*, first of all he calls the seekers of the Truth, which are the beloved ones of the Guru,

19. *Ibid*, M.2, p.1243.

20. *Ibid*, M.3, p.113.

Anmrit bānī gur kī mīthī.  
gurmukhi virlai kinai chakhi dīthī.

21. *Ibid*, M.3, p.125.

sabadai upajai anmrit bānī gurmukhi ākhi sunāvanīā

22. *Ibid*, M.3, p.160.

jis kī bānī tisu māhe samānī terī akath kathā gur sabadi vakhānī.



to get together and sing the True Revelation, which is attained by the Guru and is sublime. Only those who have the Grace of God can enshrine His revelation in their minds. He asks them to drink the nectar of *guru bānī* and contemplate on Him who is the support of the whole world and to always sing the True *bānī*.<sup>23</sup> That *bani* which has not been revealed by the *Satiguru* is false. Not only this, those who utter the false *bānī*, they are false ones, false are the hearers and false are the reciters of that *bānī*. The creator of false *bānī* utters God's Name but not from their inner self because their mind is lured by the *māyā*. They utter the Name in a routine manner<sup>24</sup> without internalising its true spirit. The Guru further avers that the *bānī* should be heard with full involvement. When the *bānī* is understood through the perfect Guru, all the saints and *gurmukhs* are in ecstasy. Both the hearers and utterers of *bānī* become pure and they see that the all-pervading God is all over.<sup>25</sup> Guru Amardas also affirms that God Himself makes him utter the True *bānī*.<sup>26</sup>

Though Guru Ramdas does not make use of words *sachī* and *kachī bānī* like Guru Amardas, but he does make a distinction between the embodiment of truth (*sat-sarūp-bānī*) which is uttered by the Satguru and false prattle (*kach-pich*) which is uttered by others in imitation. There are some who mimic the *bānī* of *satguru* but such people are false and are simply wasting their lives.<sup>27</sup> They are not one with their inner self.

23. *Ibid*, M.3, p.920.

āvahu sikh satiguru ki piāriho gāvahu sachī bānī.  
bānī ta gāvahu guru kerī bāniā siri bānī.

24. *Ibid*, M.3, p.920.

satiguru binā hor kachī hai bānī.

25. *Ibid*, M.3, p.922.

dūkh rog santāp utare sunī sachī bānī.

26. *Ibid*, M.3, p.1061.

sadā anandu sache gun gāvahi sachu bānī bolāidā.

27. *Ibid*, M.4, p.304.

satigur kī bānī sati sarūpa hai gurbāni bāniāi.

The view that God Himself makes the revelation through *Satguru* has been further confirmed by the fourth guru. He says that the revelation of *Satguru* is perfectly true because God Himself makes the *satguru* to speak.<sup>28</sup>

Guru Ramdas has given the status of Guru to the *bānī*. According to him, there is no difference between the Guru and revelation made by him. They are one. The Guru's revelation is the embodiment of the Guru and the Guru resides in revelation and in revelation is contained the Nectar which is the giver of spiritual life. The Guru utters revelation and the seeker must accept it. Guru emancipates the seeker by manifesting himself in his *bānī*.<sup>29</sup> It is the unique feature of Sikhism that the Guru is accepted as perfect and permanent in the form of *bānī* not in his corporeal form because corporeal form is ephemeral and his *bānī* is eternal. And the fourth Guru had given this status to *bānī*. Guru Gobind Singh formally bestowed this status on *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* which contains the Sikh revelation. He ordained the Sikhs to accept the Granth as Guru after him and seek guidance from the holy book. The fourth Guru holds that the *bānī* of Guru and God's Name are one. Guru Ramdas declares that the *bānī* of the Guru is virtually God Himself.<sup>30</sup>

Arjan Dev, the fifth Guru, holds that the word of God is indescribable and mainstay of the saints.<sup>31</sup> Guru Arjan has used the words for the revelation of God such as *prabh ki bānī*, *anmrit bānī*, *anhat bānī*, *govind kī bānī*, *hari kī bānī*. According to Guru Arjan Dev, God's Revelation is pure and immaculate which dwells in all hearts and is heard by all ears and recited by all in the form of Guru's *bānī*.

28. *Ibid*, M.4, p.308.

*satigur kī bānī sati sati kari jānahu gursikhahu har karta āpi muhu kadhāe.*

29. *Ibid*, M.4, p.982.

30. *Ibid*, M.4, p.982.

*gurubānī kahai sevak janū mānai partakh guru nistāre.*

31. *Ibid*, M.5, p.80.

*tere bachan anup apār santan adhār bānī bīcharīai jō.*



The *bānī* is *mantram* and is to be imbibed as such in the mind. The fifth Guru holds that *bānī* or great beings (emancipated souls) is the *mantram* which removes the sense of I-ness and the ignorance from human mind.<sup>32</sup>

The idea that the *bānī* comes directly from God has been held by the Gurus. Guru Arjan Dev also said that when the seeker is blessed with the *bānī* of God then all his woes and sorrows are dispelled.<sup>33</sup>

According to Guru Arjan, then revelation of the perfect Guru is pleasing to the mind of the *Pārbraham* i.e. the Transcendent God.<sup>34</sup> Guru Arjan concludes that God in the form of *bānī* is all pervasive. The Guru himself heard it from God and has uttered it to others.<sup>35</sup>

So we can say that revelation in Sikhism is in the form of the *bānī*. Whatever truth the Gurus received from God, they conveyed it to the world. They had direct communion with God. The Gurus did not attach importance to their corporeal form. They value most their utterances of their communion with God. So there is no difference between the Guru and the *bānī*.

In the second chapter, while studying the traditions, earlier to Sikhism especially Hinduism and Christianity, we have seen that according to Hinduism there are possibly four ways in which the Reality reveals itself to man. They are revelation of reality in the form of *śabda* or *śruti*, revelation of Reality in the mystical experience, Reality as manifested in nature and fourthly as revealed through *avatāra* to save *dharma*. In Christianity, as we have seen earlier, it is held that there are three main ways in which God communicates

32. *Ibid*, M.5, p.1208.

*bānī* mantar mahā purakhan kī manahi utāran mān kau.

33. *Ibid*, M.5, p.628.

*dhur kī bānī āi, tini sagalī chint mitāi.*

34. *Ibid*, M.5, p.1075.

*gur pūre kī bānī, pārbraham manī bhānī.*

35. *Ibid*, M.5, p.1075.

*gur kī bānī sabh māhi samāni āpi sunī tai āpi vakhānī.*



religious truths to rational creature. In Islam, we find the reference to the two commonly accepted conceptions of revelation, the general and special. We find both these conceptions in the *Qūran*. God's general manifestation is in nature and His special revelation has been made to the prophet. The *Qūran* has been considered as God's speech and uncreated. Here we are concerned with the conception of *avatāra* in Hinduism and God's special revelation in Christianity as Jesus Christ.

## Rejection of avtarvada in Sikhism

*Avatarana* is a noun in Sanskrit language.<sup>36</sup> Its root is in *am* and the meaning implied by it is descending, alighting. *Ava-tāra*'s root is in *as* which means descent. This word has been used in general and specific senses. In general sense it is used for the appearance of any deity upon earth but in the specific sense it is used for the incarnations of Vishnu in ten principal forms. In the third sense any distinguished person in the language of respect is also called an *avatāra* or incarnation of deity. It is believed by the Hindus that although God is all-pervading, omnipresent and is always, even then He appears on earth in special forms through His *yog māyā* from time to time. God, who is also called Vishnu, has ten major incarnation viz: the fish (*matsya*), the tortoise, (*kūrma*), the boar (*varāha*), the man-lion (*narasimha*), the dwarf (*vāmana*), Rama with the axe (*parsurama*) Rama (the hero of the *Rāmāyana*), Krishna (the prime figure in the *Bhagvad Gītā*), Buddha (Sidhartha) and *Kalki* who is yet to appear.<sup>37</sup> There are classifications of *Avtāras* as primary and secondary, whole and partial etc. According to another scholar, these ten *avatāras* of God are an indication of the evolution of man from a fish to superman that is *Kalki*. According to him, "Each is an incarnation. But the latter ones are more so than the earlier ones. The perfect human being, the superman is yet to come."<sup>38</sup> The number of *avtāras* differs in various sources of Hinduism. According to some the number is eight. To

36. M.M. Williams, *op.cit.*, 'Avatarana'

37. Rajbali Pandey, *op.cit.*, p.54.

38. Saraswati Chennakesava, *an, op.cit.*, p.47.



some the number is ten whereas others fix it at sixteen. Still others declare that there are twenty four *avītaras*. But the ten above mentioned *avītaras* are the major ones on which every one agrees. The twenty-four *avītaras* which have been mentioned in the *Purānas* are *Nārāyan* (*Virāt Purusha*), *Brahmā*, *Sanak-Sanandan-Sanat Kumar*, *Nar-Narayan*, *Kapil*, *Dattatreya*, *Suash*, *Haygrib*, *Rshabh*, *Prta*, *Matsya*, *Kurma*, *Hans*, *Dhanvantari*, *Vāmana*, *Parashuram*, *Mohini*, *Narasimha*, *Vedvyas*, *Ram*, *Balram*, *Krishna*, *Buddh* and *Kalki*.<sup>39</sup>

As in some other religions, similarly in Hinduism also, it is held that before coming into manifestation, the manifold world of creation was in a state of sleep. It was a state of equilibrium in which all the qualities of God were completely suspended. "This power, which exists in an absolutely static or suspended state, is pure vacuity or nothingness. . ."<sup>40</sup> Dr. Surendernath Dasgupta further holds that this power is, "one and exists in identity with the Brahman, or ultimate Reality. It is this power which creates as its own transformation all categories pure and impure and all material forms as emanations from out of itself."<sup>41</sup> From this power which is called the power of God, the evolutionary process started, as its own transformation. According to Dr Surendernath Dasgupta, the three forms which are one with the Vasudeva perform three types of functions such as "(1) the creation, maintenance and destruction of the world; (2) the protection of the mundane beings and (3) lending assistance to those devotees who seek to attain the ultimate emancipation."<sup>42</sup> These are the three manifestations but in addition to them there are two more categories of *avītaras* which are called *āvesāvatāra* and *sāksād-avītāra* and *āvesāvatāra* is further sub-divided as *svarūpavesa* and *sakty-avesa*. The *sāksād-avītaras* are considered as primary *avītaras* which are the direct incarnation of God and *āvesāvatāras* are of secondary nature. "These secondary *āvesāvatāras* are by the will of God produced in the form of human beings, as Rama, Kṛṣṇa, in the form of animals, as the

39. Rajbali Pandey, *op.cit.*, p.55.

40. Surendernath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol.III, *op.cit.*, p.36.

41. *Ibid*, p.37.

42. *Ibid*, p.38.



boar, the fish and the man-lion, or even as a tree (the crooked mango tree in the dandaka forest). These forms are not the original transcendent forms of God, but manifest divine functions through the will of God. The primary forms (*sāksād-avatāra*) of incarnation are derived directly from the part of the Lord just as lamp is lighted from another.<sup>43</sup> It is further held that only the transcendent forms of manifestation should be worshipped to attain the emancipation and not the secondary ones. "Brahman, Siva, Buddha, Vyasa, Arjuna, Pāvaka and Kāvera are inspired persons or *āvesāvatāras* who should not be worshipped by those who seek liberation."<sup>44</sup>

The concept of *avatāra* is mainly related with the *bhakti*. The *avatāra* is a mediator between God and the human being. God becomes more personal in the form of *avatāra*. Man can feel more intimate relation with a 'Form' than with an abstract 'idea'. As one scholar has remarked, "unlike the superhuman gods of the Vedic Samhitas which represent natural forces (the Sun, Storm, Fire, etc.) on the one hand, and the abstract Upaniṣadic concept of all-pervading formless Brahman manifesting itself in various forms and shapes on the other, the *avatāras* in the epics are the human intermediaries between the Supreme and mortals. This concept had a great impact on Hindu religious life, for here God is assumed to manifest Himself in a form that can be appreciated even by the least sophisticated."<sup>45</sup> In *Mahābhārata*, though we get restatement of the Upaniṣadic philosophy in the form of *Gita*, but here one feels the personal relationship with God in the form of Krishna.<sup>46</sup>

There is a conception of revelation in Christianity which is called the "Heilsgeschichtlich" conception of revelation, that is the 'salvation history.' "The *Heilsgeschichte* is the way in which a certain segment of human history—beginning with the origins of the national

43. *Ibid*, pp.38-39.

44. *Ibid*, p.39.

45. Sen, K.M., *Hinduism*, (Penguin Books), 1976), p.74.

46. *Ibid*, p.74.



life of Israel and ending with the birth of the Christian community as a response to Jesus—was experienced by men of faith and became understood and remembered as the story of the God's gracious dealings with his people."<sup>47</sup> God makes Him known in action in the events of human history. The most important event is the birth of Jesus as saviour of mankind. "The son of man has come to save that which was lost."<sup>48</sup> In Christianity we find special revelation, the special disclosure of God in the form of Christ and the theory of incarnation.

The theory of incarnation is also related with Christianity. The word incarnation is derived from the Latin word *carnis*, 'flesh' and means 'becoming flesh'.<sup>49</sup> The doctrine in Christianity is that, "the divine Son, who from all eternity is God in the same full sense that the Creator-Father and the Holy Spirit are divine, completely and permanently joined Himself to our genuine human nature, so as to form one real person who was at once both fully divine and fully human."<sup>50</sup> According to one scholar, the great saints of Christianity can also be considered as incarnations, "God's initiative can be seen at work in the history of many of the greats of the Christian saints, the most notable example being perhaps St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi and St. Ignatius Loyola."<sup>51</sup>

In Sikhism the theory of *avatārvād* has not been accepted as such. Only God has been accepted as the one Reality. All other is His creation. *Avtāras* also form part of His creation. The names of *Ishar*, *Gorakh*, *Brahmā* and *Pārvaṭī* have been mentioned in *Japuji*.<sup>52</sup>

47. Paul Edwards, *op.cit.*, Vol.7, p.190.

48. Alexander Balmain and others, *Apologetics*, (T.T. Clark, 38 George Street, 1882), p.48.

49. John Lawson, *op.cit.*, p.49.

50. *Ibid*, p.49.

51. R.C.Zahner, *op.cit.*, p.147.

52. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.2.  
gurmukhi nadan gurmukhi vedan gurmukhi rahia smai.

by Guru Nanak as the creation of God. *Avatāras* have been considered as the medium of the revelation of God to man. They are the mediators. These three deities of Hindu Trinity are considered independent forces in Hinduism. But according to Guru Nanak, they are not independent forces. They are under God because only He is conceived as the Supreme Force.<sup>53</sup>

It is held in *Rāg Māru* by Guru Nanak that before creation the transcendent God was seated in the state of trance (*sun*). First of all He created inanimate nature out of His Absolute Self. Then He created air, water, the whole universe and the human body. And in the human body He ingrained His light.<sup>54</sup>

The purpose of Revelation is to make one understand the Divine *hukam*. Guru Amardas<sup>55</sup> holds that *Brahmā* was given four *Vedas* by God. He reflected upon them but he could not understand the Divine *hukam* due to which he committed mistakes and has been coming and going between heaven and hell. Similarly, He created many kings which are called His *avatāras*. Even they could not find His end. The Guru means that even *avatāras* are fallible, they are not perfect or Absolute.

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53. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1036.  
jā tisu bhānā ta jagat upāiā.

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brahmā bisanu mahes upāe māyā mohu vadhāidā.  
54. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1037.  
sunṅkalā aprampar dhārī.  
sunaho brahmā bisanu mahesu upāe.

55. *Ibid*, M.3, p.423.  
chāre ved brahmā kau die.  
parh parh kare vichārī.



According to Guru Amardas,<sup>56</sup> the *avatāras* embody but only a small particle of Divine. They have been ruling and fighting for pain and pleasure like other kings. *Shiva* and *Brahmā* have been serving Him but could not know the Truth, because God who is free of fear, is Formless, is unknowable.

According to the Guru,<sup>57</sup> through *Brahmā* was revealed the *Vedas* but he himself was involved in *māyā moh* and desire. *Mahān Dev* i.e., *Śiva*, though a man of spiritual knowledge, was full of wrath and ego. *Vishnu (Kisan)* is always engaged in reincarnating himself. According to the fourth Guru, Ramdas,<sup>58</sup> *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Śiva* could not get rid of their ego, due to which they forgot their creator. They got themselves worshipped by the people as God.

Guru Arjan in *Gauri Sukhmani*<sup>59</sup> holds that there is only one God. The *avatars* are His creation and in the end they merge in Him. He has created the universe and creatures many times and manifested Himself in countless ways. Everything created by Him merges in Him. Nobody can know His limits. To say that God was born in the eighth day of moon (the birthday of *Kṛṣṇa*) is utter nonsense, says Guru Arjan. It is illogical to say that God takes birth and dies. Body is fallible and how a fallible thing can be a Perfect? To offer sweets to stone-god is a mistake. He curses those who say that God comes in

56. *Ibid*, M.3, p.516.

Ansā autaru upāionu bhau dūja kia.

57. *Ibid*, M.3, p.559.

Brahmā bed bānī pargātī māyā moh pasārā.

mahādeo giāni vartai ghari apanai tamāsu bahut ahankārā.

58. *Ibid*, M.4, p.735.

brahmā bisanu mahādeo traī gun rogī vichi. . . . .

59. *Ibid*, M.4., p.276.

kaī kot hoe avatārā, kaī jugat kīno bistārā.

cycle of birth and death.

According to Guru Gobind Singh, God has created the whole of the universe. He created many *Indras*, *Upindras*, *Brahmās* and *Rudras* and then He Himself destroyed them.<sup>60</sup> He further holds that Śiva came to this world, then went away, then he came back. There also are many *avatārās* like Ramchandra and Krishna. There have been so many *Brahmas* and *Vishnūs* and *Puranās*. All have been coming and going from this world. There have been so many *avatārās* like *Ashvani Kumars* and *Hansa avatārās*. All lived on this earth and then were absorbed in the earth.<sup>61</sup> They may be *Ramas*, *Krishanas* and *Rasuls* but nobody is acceptable to Him without meditation on His Name.<sup>62</sup> According to Guru, God is inscrutable (*agādhe*), fearless (*abhai*), unity without another (*advai*), the beginning (*ādi*) and eternal (*abināsin*). He is beyond (*pre amprā*), supreme (*param*), perfect (*pūran*) and all light (*parkāsh*). The process is going on. He creates, destroys and creates again.<sup>63</sup>

In *Bachitar Natak* he laments that whosoever was earlier commissioned by God to preach His name started instead, getting himself worshipped.<sup>64</sup> But he declares himself unequivocally the servant of God and warns that whosoever calls him 'God' (*Parmesur*) will go to hell.<sup>65</sup> Guru Gobind Singh himself has written about the

60. Dasam Granth, *Akal Ustat*, Vol.1, p.16.  
kotī inder upinder banāi, brahmā rudar upāi khapāi.

61. *Ibid*, p.26.  
ek siv bhae ek gae ek pher bhae.  
ram chander krisan ke avtar bhi anek hai.

62. *Ibid*, p.22.  
kāi ram krisan rasūl. bin bhagat ko na kabūl.

63. *Ibid*, p.30.  
kete krisan se kīt upāe.  
usāre gare phere mete banāe.

64. *Ibid*, *Bachitar Natak*, p.71.

65. *Ibid*, p.73.



twenty four *avataras* of Hinduism. In the beginning of his narration, he says that whenever there was degeneration of *dharama* God sent the *avataras* on earth. And then destroyed them.<sup>66</sup>

Bhai Gurdas elucidates this very idea. According to him, the ten *avatāras* were created but they could not know the inscrutable.<sup>67</sup> He has talked in detail about *Brahmā*, *Vishnu*, *Siva* and their incarnations. The important thing to mention here is the view of Bhai Gurdas about Guru Nanak's coming in this world. According to him, God Almighty responded to the prayer of the people and sent Guru Nanak on this earth. According to Bhai Gurdas, Guru Nanak was sent on a special mission on this earth by God. He came to emancipate the world in the dark times of *kaliyug*.<sup>68</sup>

The idea of God taking human form or any form has been clearly denied in Sikhism. The Gurus do not question the divinity of the *avatāras* but they question them being worshipped as God. They see nothing wrong in their coming on earth for the restoration of *dharma*. But they object to their worship as God.

## Divine Manifestation

In the rejection of *avatārvāda* we have seen that in Sikhism the concept of *avatārvāda*, God taking birth in human form has been totally rejected. The Gurus, however, were commissioned by God. They considered themselves the servants of God. So the Sikh view of revelation or divine manifestation is opposed to the Hindu view of *avatārvāda*. A question arises as to what is the nature of divine manifestation in Sikhism and about the status of the Gurus? The Sikh concept of divine manifestation is nearer to the one in Islam. The position of Guru in Sikhism is closer to that of prophets and saints in

66. *Ibid*, p.169.

67. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, op.cit., p.76.

das avatār akāru kari ekankāru na alakhu lakhāiā.

68. *Ibid*, p.1.



Islam. We generally use the word prophet for Jesus Christ and Hazrat Muhammad. But Hazrat Muhammad is not a prophet in the Christian sense. The appropriate word for Hazrat Muhammad is *Paigambar*. The correct connotation of the Arabic word *Paigambar* is the carrier of the message.

It is said that when Hazrat Muhammad was over thirty years of age, love of God and love of His worship began to possess him more and more. To avoid the mischiefs of the people of Mecca, he chose a spot two or three miles away for meditation. It was a sort of a cave, shaped out of the stone, on the top of a hill. His wife, Khadiza, would prepare food for him enough for few days and with this he would go to the cave. When he was forty years old, he saw a vision, in that cave. He saw a figure who was commanding him to read. "The word *Quran* indicates reading. The revealing angel directed Muhammad to read: In the name of thy Lord who Createth man from a clot. Read: And thy Lord is the most Bounteous, who teacheth by the pen, teacheth man that which he know not. (*The Koran* XCVI-1.5)."<sup>69</sup> This is first revelation to prophet Muhammad. The prophet was commanded to proclaim the message of God and was promised the help and protection by Him in the proclamation of this message. The verses fortold a time when the world would be taught all manner of knowledge through the use of the pen. The verses constitute an epitome of the *Quran*.

It is said that when he awoke from the trance, he went out of the cave on to the hill side and heard the same awe-inspiring voice say, "O Muhammad, Thou art Allah's messenger, and I am Gabriel." Then he raised his eyes and saw the angel, in the likeness of a man, standing in the sky above the horizon.<sup>70</sup> So Muhammad was commissioned by God to spread His message. He was a messenger and never claimed himself to be God.

69. Karandikar, M.A., *Islam*, (Bombay, Orient Longmans, second edition, 1969), p.4.

70. Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Glorious Koran*, (New York, New American Library, 1924), p.x.



In the similar manner, the Sikh Gurus were the messengers of God. They never claimed themselves to be God. They were commissioned by God to preach and practise the Truth. They uttered whatsoever was revealed to them by God. We have many references to this effect in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, in *Janam-Sākhīs*, in *Dasam Granth* and the writings of Bhai Gurdas. It is said that Guru Nanak has been meditating on the highest Truth from the very beginning of his life. But he got the actual vision at the *Vein* stream. It is told that the Guru sat in *smādhi* on the bank of the river at Sultanpur. We are told in the *Janam-Sākhīs* how the Guru was lost in meditation for three days in the river. It is held that the Guru, "had ascended to the plane of truth and appeared before the True one. On the third day, he reappeared with a luminous halo around his face. Crowds gathered around him."<sup>71</sup> And the Guru uttered his first article of faith. He declared that, "there is no Hindu, there is no Muslim."<sup>72</sup> Bhai Gurdas has given a mystical account in his *vārs*. He has said that the *Baba* first received the Grace of God, then he performed austerities. He fed himself on sand and *akk*, and slept on the hard ground, the place covered with stones. On ascending the abode of Truth, he was conferred the nine-fold treasure of the '*nām*' and was graced with humility. In his contemplation, *baba* had the vision of the world being consumed in passion, ignorance, fear and hatred. It was confusion all around because there was none to give proper guidance and with humanity wallowing in misery. For this very reason, the *baba* put on a mendicant's garb and started for his mission to lead the people out of this suffering.<sup>73</sup>

We find the reference in Guru Nanak's *bānī* also to this unique experience of his. Guru Nanak says that he, the worthless bard (*dhādī*), was called to God's presence and was blest with His service. He was ordered from above to serve Him day and night. He called him in His true abode. He received the robe of honour of '*sachī sift slāh*', to sing

71. Raja Sir Daljit Singh, *Guru Nanak*, (Lahore, The Lion Press, June 1943), p.20.

72. *Ibid*, p.22.

73. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, Var 1, stanza 24.

Pahilan bābe pāiyā bakhasdar piccho de phir ghālī kamāi.



His praises. He gave him the everlasting food of Nectar, Name. Whosoever has taken this food (of Nectar Name) through Guru's wisdom is satiated forever and is in peace. The bard now dwells on the God's Name and sings His *śabad*. Nanak says that by praising the True God, one attains Him.<sup>74</sup>

In Sikhism divine manifestation is expressed in the concept of '*joti*' and not in the taking of birth by God as a human being. It is ascension of the seeker to God and not the descent of God.<sup>75</sup> Guru Nanak says that he is a sacrifice to his Guru who makes angels out of men. As far as the use of the word *avtar* is concerned, it has mainly been used to connote the birth of a person. Use of this word may merely indicate the reverential attitude of the person towards the saints for whose birth the word might have been used. It is expressive of the attitude of the follower or the narrator towards the saint. It does not indicate any acceptance of the doctrine of God's birth in human form.

According to Guru Amardas,<sup>76</sup> only rare persons achieve this state of mind that they tastes the word of God. It is very sweet. And that person who tastes the *bānī* the light comes into him. He is illumined. He tastes the essence of Truth and is in tune to the word. In Sikhism, the divine manifestation is in the form of *bānī*.

In Sikhism, one is not cut off from nature, one lives in the society and from the society moves towards the higher order. Revelation is something natural not super-natural. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* rejected miracles. It is a gradual evolution from the lower to the higher, from the matter to the spiritual. It is to be achieved by stages as described in the *Japuji* in the process of *khandas*. The revelation in Sikhism is not an intermittent or timely process but a continuous

74. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, p.150.  
hau dhādī vekār kārī lāia.

75. *Ibid*, M.1, pp.462-63.  
jini mānas te devate kīe karat na lāgi vār.

76. *Ibid*, M.3, p.113.  
amrit bāni gur ki mūhi gurmukhi virai kinai chakhi dīthi.



expression of the direct experience. The religious experience of Sikhism can be compared with the mystic path of the sufi, especially with their stages of *ilam* or intellectual and *M'arifat* or intuitional knowledge. The second stage of *M'arifat* is similar to the revelatory stage in Sikhism. It is ascending towards God. It is the knowledge of the universe, the divine knowledge, which is the result of God's Grace.

So far as the position of Sikh Gurus is concerned, we should keep in view their relationship with God and the Sikh. The Gurus described position vis-a-vis God as that of a bard, slave, servant, son, spouse, attendant, seeker and His wrestler etc. And position vis-a-vis the Sikhs as that of a boat (which ferries them across the ocean of fear), brother, friend, philosopher, guide, nourisher, the giver of *nām* and *sachā pātishāh* etc. A unique feature of Sikh thought in this context is that of the concept of *Āpe gur chelā* i.e., the follower becoming the Guru and the Guru becoming the follower.

## Phenomenal Manifestation (Qudrat)

The general kind of revelation of God in Sikhism is believed to be in His creation. According to the Sikh viewpoint, God reveals Himself through His *qudrat* and His *hukam*. The concept of *qudrat* implies the whole existence from the material level to the level of most rational and conscious being. *Hukam* means the causal relationship, the orderliness which makes the universe a cosmos. It may be termed as the divine reason. We have already discussed the concept of *hukam* in the fourth chapter, Now we shall take up the concept of *qudrat*.

*Qudrat* (a Arabic word) means, 'to be able, power, ability, potency, vigour, force, authority, universe, nature,' etc.<sup>77</sup> F. Steingrass has given some additional meanings of the word *qudrat* and has

77. John T. Platts, *A Dictionary of Urdu Classical-Hindi and English*, (New Delhi, Oriental Books reprint Corporation, first edition, 1977), p.788, 'Qudrat'



defined *qudrat* as 'being, potency, omnipotence, providence, presence, the creation, destiny'.<sup>78</sup>

*Qudrat* has been used in Sikhism in the sense of the power of God and a means through which He manifests Himself. Kapur Singh, a well-known Sikh Scholar has linked the concept of *qudrat* with the concept of *Puruṣa* and *Prakriti* of *Samkhya* system in Indian philosophy. According to him, Guru Nanak has retained the concept of *purusa* of Indian philosophy but has dropped the concept of *Prakriti* "though he was quite familiar not only with the dualism of these terms, but also with their philosophical import."<sup>79</sup> Kapur Singh is of the view that Guru Nanak retained the term *Puruṣa*, "as fundamental to what might be called the philosophic infra-structure of the religion he revealed."<sup>80</sup> But the Guru has interpreted it differently from the Indian classical system of thought. Guru Nanak has used the term *Puruṣa* for God, who is creative Being (*kartā purukh*). The noted scholar observes that, "For the other term of this dualism Guru Nanak has employed an Arabic word *qudrat* and has relegated the term *Prakriti* altogether to other contexts."<sup>81</sup> As we know according to *Samkhya* the world whether it is manifest or unmanifest is not derived from *Puruṣa*. It does not originate from *Puruṣa*.

According to Sikh thought, the *Puruṣa* or *Kartā purakh* is the originator of this world and the ground of this whole manifestation. According to Kapur Singh, Guru Nanak, "gave a precise meaning and a philosophical exactitude to the word *qudrat* from Arabic language."<sup>82</sup> He has differentiated the term *qudrat* from *prakriti*. According to him, *prakriti* is absolute, self-existent while the *qudrat* in Guru Nanak's *bānī* is created by and dependent upon the creator. "The status of

78. F. Steingrass, *op.cit.*, 'qudrat', p.957.

79. Harbans Singh, Editor, *Perspective on Guru Nanak*, (Patiala, Punjabi University, first edition, 1975), p.46.

80. *Ibid*, p.46.

81. *Ibid*, p.47.

82. *Ibid*, p.53.



Nature in the philosophic scheme of Guru Nanak is also encompassed within the time-cycle, so that the *Quranic* status of God, 'The First and Last' remains intact."<sup>83</sup>

These may be the reasons as mentioned above by the learned scholar. The concept of *qudrat* is entirely different from the concept of *prakriti* used in Indian thought. In the concept of *qudrat*, in Sikhism, the expression or manifestation of the Reality moves from the lower level to the higher level, from the gross matter to organism, from the rational beings to the highest spiritual level. It leads from the immanent to the transcendent, from the phenomenal to the noumenal.

Guru Nanak holds the view that the manifest world sprang forth from the act of His willing. From His one word 'be' the world came into existence. From that one word, the whole inorganic universe came forth (*lakh darīāo*). His creation cannot be comprehended. It is so wonderful and amazing.<sup>84</sup>

Guru Nanak has used the word '*eko kvāo*' in Japuji which can be compared with the word 'kun' in the *Quran*. It is said in the *Quran* that "the originator of the heavens and the earth, when He decreeth a thing, He saith unto it only; Be (*kun*) and it is."<sup>85</sup> Guru Nanak further holds that God Himself creates the nature and arranges it. He Himself,

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83. Ibid, pp.53-54.

84. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M. 1, p.3.  
*kīṭā pasāu eko kavāo, tis te hoe lakh darīāo.*

85. Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall, *op.cit.*, p.43.

manifesting His will through *qudrat*, controls its progression and evolution.<sup>86</sup> The purpose and the significance of His nature is not possible to be evaluated by man.<sup>87</sup> He observes that the world, the universe and the regions created by Him through His *qudrat* are true.<sup>88</sup> He denounces the idea of nature being an illusion. His creation is not fortuitous or accidental, it is rational in nature, everything is happening under His *hukam*. He himself is residing everywhere.<sup>89</sup>

According to Guru Nanak,<sup>90</sup> God creates nature and then reflects on His own creation. He also sustains it. He Himself knows the why of it. He himself sees it. Himself knows it and He Himself realizes His *hukam* through *qudrat*. He is ingrained in everybody as *śabad*. God is not separate from His *qudrat* and He is to be known through His *śabad* in the form of *qudrat*.

Guru Nanak has used the words, '*pasāu, kare, pāsā dhāli, sāji, sājio, vasīā*' with *qudrat*. They indicate that His creation is an extension of His own self (*pasāu*), well thought (*pāsā dhāli*) beautiful and orderly (*sāji, sājio*) and is inhabited by Him (*vasīā*).

After the discussion made above, we can say that the concept of *qudrat* in Sikhism is different from the concept of *prakriti* in Indian Philosophy. Here in Sikhism, God is the creator of *qudrat*. *Qudrat* is not absolute or self-existent as in *Samkhya*. It is not only the created one but God resides in His *qudrat*. It is the abode of God. The nature of creation in Sikhism seems to be nearer the views of Kant and

86. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.1170.

*āpe qudrati kare sāji.*

87. *Ibid*, M.1, p.152.

*kahnā hai kichhu kahanu na jāi, tau qudrat kīmat nāhi pāi.*

88. *Ibid*, M.1, p.463.

*sache tere khand sache brahmand.*

*sache terī qudrat sache pātsāh.*

89. *Ibid*, M.1, p.464.

*Nanak hukamai andar vekhai vartai tāko tāk.*

90. *Ibid*, M.1, p.580.

*kītā vekhai sāhibu apanā qudrati kare bichāro.*



Bradley. God's manifestation takes myriad forms from matter to spiritual. The place of man is the highest in His creation, because he has got the capacity to realize the divine in him.

In Western thought, Kant has made the distinction between phenomena or sensible entities as appearances and the noumena or intelligible entities as things-in-themselves that is the essences. We can also compare the concept of *qudrat* in Sikhism with the concept of nature in Bradley. Bradley has made distinction between appearance and Reality and between Nature and Absolute.

According to him, appearance is nature and Reality is the Absolute. He further says, "anything which comes short when compared with Reality, gets the name of appearance. . . Appearance consists in the looseness of content from existence, and because of this self-estrangement, every finite aspect is called appearance."<sup>91</sup> According to his theory, the Absolute is immanent in every appearance and there cannot be any appearance without Reality. But this does not mean that Reality is the sum total of the things. "It is the unity in which all things, coming together, are transmuted, in which they are changed all alike, though not change equally."<sup>92</sup> According to him, Nature is "on the one hand, that show whose reality lies barely in primary qualities," and on the other, "that endless world of sensible life which appeals to our sympathy and extorts our wonder."<sup>93</sup> According to Bradley, everything is determined by the relations in which it stands and with increases of determinateness, a thing becomes more and more real. In this context, while considering the reality of nature he observes that, "By gradual increase of that reality, you reach a stage at which nature, as such is absolved."<sup>94</sup> It moves from the lower level to the higher level. The appearance progresses.

91. Bradley, F.M., *Appearance and Reality*, (London, Oxford University Press, 1969), p.430.

92. *Ibid*, p.432.

93. *Ibid*, p.435.

94. *Ibid*, p.438.



In Sikhism, the Absolute is immanent in nature and in every practice of creation there is the light of the Absolute and this element of Spirit increases as the creation moves from the lower level to the higher level. Bradley has not explained as to how the nature came into existence. In Sikhism it has been clearly stated that the *qudrat* is the creation of *qādar*. In the whole nature of the manifestation, man is the highest kind of manifestation because he has got the capacity to realize God.

## Panentheism Examined

In this chapter we will analyze the nature of relationship between the Creator and His creation. Whether creation is dependent upon Him and is determined by Him or He is also dependent upon His creation? Whether He is transcendent or immanent? Whether He is fully immanent or He is transcendent as well as immanent? All these relations between the Reality and the appearance or God and the nature are known by different names. The term panentheism is used for this type of relation in which the Creator is transcendent as well as immanent. The term panentheism has been taken from German language (Gr. Pan, all; en, in; theos, God). The Philosophic position, according to panentheism is, God inter-penetrates everything without cancelling relative independent existence of the world of entities; moreover, while God is immanent, this immanence is not absolute (as in pantheism): God is more than the world, transcendent in the sense that though the created is dependent upon the Creator, the Creator is not dependent upon the created. God, thus is held to be the highest type of unity, viz. a unity in multiplicity. The term is employed to cover a mediating position between pantheism with its extreme immanence and a theism of the type which tends to extreme transcendent.<sup>95</sup>

In *Japuji*, it is held that , He is the one universal Being, the Real,

95. Dagobert D. Runes, *op.cit.*, 'panentheism', p.223.



the Spirit. He is the Creator, the Controller and Enjoyer, Beyond restraint, the spontaneous, beyond any internal antagonisms, the harmonious, He is timeless, the embodied. Yet He does not come into birth and death, He is self-existent. We can attune to Him through Guru's Grace.<sup>96</sup> While describing the attributes, it is further said that the Real one was in the beginning, the Real one was before the beginning of the ages. He is through all ages. The Real one shall ever be.<sup>97</sup> This is the basic message and teaching of *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* that God is the only one Reality who is our Creator, our Lord. We should seek His Grace and attune to Him. The attributes which are described above can only be the attributes of God. He is the only real one because all other things are the creation and being created they are subject to the laws of nature and hence perishable. All these attributes indicate His transcendence, His distinctness from His creation.

Guru Nanak while talking about the Creator compares himself, the creature, to a fish and God, the Creator to a river. God is just like a river which is full of wisdom and the creature is a fish in that river. As the fish cannot measure the expanse of the river, similarly man cannot apprehend his Creator. Whatsoever man sees is the manifestation of God and man cannot live without Him still he cannot know Him fully.<sup>98</sup>

Guru Nanak further holds that He is immanent as well as transcendent. He states that all the eyes are that of God but He had none, the myriad forms are His, yet He has no feet, He has thousands

96. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, *Mulmantra*.

97. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1.

ādi sachu jugādu sachu.

hai bhī sachu Nanak hosī bhī sachu.

98. *Ibid*, M.1, p.25.

tu dariao dānā bīnā mai machhulī kaise antu lahā.

of fragrances yet being without one. This brings out very lucidly the transcendence and the immanence of God. In *Rāg Dhanāsari*,<sup>99</sup> he states that being immanent in His creation He has thousands of eyes but because He is transcendent He has none.

According to Guru Amardas, God is not only immanent, He is transcendent also. For thirty six ages He remained transcendent. Then He Himself became immanent.<sup>100</sup> He, the one God, is immanent in all but it is through Guru's Grace that He is manifested to some seeker.<sup>101</sup> He is the creator and doer of everything.

In *Rāg Dhanāsari*, the ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur says that God abides within all. He lives within everybody. Then why go to the woods to search Him? He abides in everybody still He is transcendent. He abides in all. The way the fragrance abides in the flower and the reflection abides in the mirror.

Guru Gobind Singh talks of His transcendence and immanence in *Akal Ustat*. He is the primal Lord who pervades the waters, the earth and the sky. He is the primordial *purukha*, the formless and deathless. His light is manifested in the fourteen regions.<sup>102</sup> He is equally immanent in an elephant as well as in an ant. For Him, the rich and the poor are equal. He is non-dual, unknowable and the knower.<sup>103</sup>

99. *Ibid*, M.1, p.663.

gagan mai thālu ravi chndu dīpak bane.

100. *Ibid*, M.3, p.949.

chhatīh jug gubāru sā āpe ganat kīnī.

101. *Ibid*, M.3, p.1049.

sabhā vichi vartai iku soi.

102. Dasam Granth, *Akal Ustat*, op.cit., p.16.

pranvo ādi eknkāra.

103. *Ibid*, p.16.

hasati kī ke bīch smānā. . . . .

sab ghat ghat ke antarjāmī.



In Islam, we find the concept of God as transcendent as well as immanent. God is said to be the 'First and the last and the Outward and the Inward and He is knower of all things'.<sup>104</sup> "The Inward rank is of absolute transcendence (*tanzih-mutlaq*) is the divine essence *per se* and *esse* unknown and unknowable, Absolute *ghayb* (unseen) and immanence (*tashbih*) is predicated of Him in the stage of manifestation."<sup>105</sup> But the relation between the created and the Creator in Islam is that of 'otherness', that is there is never complete identity between the two. "This relation is not one of 'identity' but is 'definitely that of 'otherness'. Between the essence (*dhāt*) of the creator and the essence of His creatures, the essence of the knower and the essences of the known, the relation of otherness is clearly seen."<sup>106</sup>

In Sikhism, the relation of the Creator and the created is quite different from that of Islam. The essence of the Creator and the essence of the creatures is not that of 'otherness', it is that of 'sameness'. According to Guru Ramdas, as the light of the sun pervades the rays of the sun, similarly God permeates the beings. The one God permeates all places.<sup>107</sup> He brings out the relationship between God and human beings through the metaphor of sea. He says that God is the sea and the beings are His waves. This world is His play. As the waves merge in the sea, similarly the creatures merge in Him.<sup>108</sup> Because there is no other being except Him, so there is no sense of otherness.

The seeker after attaining the Reality becomes like the ray who has merged in the sun and the drop of water who has merged in the water. The light in man merges in the source of light, God and he becomes complete. After that, wherever he sees he sees God, whatever

104. Dr. Mir Valiuddin, *The Quranic Sufism*, (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidas, second edition, 1981), p.43.

105. *Ibid*, p.70.

106. *Ibid*, p.46.

107. Sri Guru Granth Sahib, M.4, p.1177.  
jiu pasari suraj kirani joti.....

108. *Ibid*, M.4, p.835.  
Nanak āpe āpi ramāiā.



he listen he listens to God and whatever he speaks he speaks to God alone. He feels so because God Himself is expanded in His creation. It is all the Creator Lord, nobody else. He Himself is the creator, Himself is the enjoyer and Himself the cause of causes.

So, whereas in Islam God remains God and the seeker remains the seeker, the difference of 'otherness' very much remains there. In Sikhism the seeker fully merges in God. He loses his identity in the identity of God. There remains no sense of 'otherness'. The part attains the whole. While describing the relationship between God and creation the Gurus have highlighted a number of its dimension. The relationship has been viewed firstly as the one between the juggler and his material whereby He shows His tricks or feats. Secondly, the creation being the extension of His ownself, He Himself takes myriad forms—animate and inanimate—and is the subject and object of every sensate and insensate experience. Thirdly, He is considered as a spectator and relisher of the wonderful play of nature.

## **Non-Contradiction as a Feature of Reality**

After examining the panentheism we now come to the concept of Reality. Reality resolves and transcends all contradictions and first of all, let us understand what is the law of non-contradiction. It is, "the principle or law, the acceptance of which commits one to holding that for any statement P, the statement 'P' and not P is false as a matter of logical necessity."<sup>109</sup>

It is admitted in the Eastern as well as in the Western philosophy that the essential condition of a true proposition is its non-contradiction i.e., its self-consistency. It must not contradict itself. True knowledge must confirm to the established facts and not contradict them. Whereas according to Brightman, "The coherence criterion looks beyond the mere self-consistency of propositions to a

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109. Antony Flew, *op.cit.*, 'non-contradiction principle of', p.232.



comprehensive, synoptic view of all experience. It takes into account all our propositions as a connected 'sticking together'.<sup>110</sup> So the criterion according to coherence theory is that, "any proposition is true, if it is both self-consistent and coherently connected with our system of propositions as a whole."<sup>111</sup>

In *Advaita Vedānta*, the crucial test of truth is considered to be consisting of its being non-contradictory. According to *Vedānta-Prihāsa*, "That knowledge is valid which has for its object something that is uncontradicted."<sup>112</sup> The author of the book referred above has cited the example of the cognition of rope as rope. To cognize a rope as rope is valid knowledge since the object of this knowledge is not contradicted. But to cognize a rope as a snake is invalid.

In *Advaita Vedānta* it is observed that, "Valid knowledge (*pramā*) is that cognition which has for its object something that is not previously known and is uncontradicted."<sup>113</sup> It is further held that the term 'uncontradicted' means the knowledge attained by the *jīvā* is "not contradicted during the transmigratory state of the *jīvā*."<sup>114</sup> The reason is that the knowledge which he attains of the relative universe is contradicted when he attains *moksha*. It is held that, "just as the notion of one's identity with the body is assumed to be valid knowledge, exactly so is this ordinary knowledge (of man, animal, tree etc.) until the self is realized (that is, until the knowledge of Brahman is attained )."<sup>115</sup> So, according to *Advaita Vedānta*, the knowledge gained by the *jīvā*, through experience of the manifold world, is valid only when he realizes the identity of the self with the *Brahman*. When he realizes this identity, all other knowledge is contradicted and he attains the uncontradicted knowledge of *Brahman* because *Brahman* is

110. Swami Satprakashananda, *op.cit.*, p.116.

111. *Ibid*, p.116.

112. *Ibid*, p.117.

113. *Ibid*, p.118.

114. *Ibid*, p.118.

115. *Ibid*, p.118.

the only uncontradicted in the absolute sense of the word. "All contradictions cease there. Brahman stays when all else is contradicted. The ultimate Reality is characterised negatively by non-contradictedness."<sup>116</sup> As we all know, according to *Advaita Vedānta*, Brahman can be described only as "neti, neti" not as it is, "By rejecting all that is limited, the śruti points to the limitless, the Absolute, Transcendently, Brahman is the sole Reality."<sup>117</sup>

A self-existent thing is unalterable because only unalterable can be self-existent. Change implies a second agency and it cannot be self-existent. Self-existent must be the nature of 'being' not of 'becoming'. Becoming means change and change cannot exist by itself. "Change is self-contradictory in so far as it requires one and the same thing at one and the same time to be and not to be what it is. If it remains what it is, it does not change; and if it changes, it does not remain what it is."<sup>118</sup> So, according to Śankara's view, the non-contradiction is the nature of Reality.

The German philosopher, Hegel, is of the view that the Reality consists in the 'whole'. Professor Bertrand Russell observes that for Hegel, "nothing. . . . is ultimately and completely real except the whole."<sup>119</sup> The whole is not a simple substance for Hegel but a complex system like an organism consisting of different parts. "The apparently separate things of which the world seems to be composed are not simply an illusion; each has a greater or lesser degree of reality, and its reality consists in an aspect of the whole, which is what it is seen to be when viewed truly."<sup>120</sup> So, according to Hegel's view, the parts are not totally illusions. They also contain a part of the Reality.

For Hegel, the Reality is rational and rational is real. Here the

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116. *Ibid*, p.118.

117. *Ibid*, p.118.

118. R.L. Naulakha, *Shankara's Brahmanavada*, (Kanpur, Kitabghar), p.66.

119. Bertrand Russell, *History of Western Philosophy*, op.cit., p.758.

120. *Ibid*, p.758.



meaning of the term 'real' is different for Hegel from the meaning attached to it by the empiricists. He is of the opinion that, what appears to be facts to the empiricists are, and must be irrational because, "It is only after their apparent character has been transformed by viewing them as aspects of the whole that they are seen to be rational."<sup>121</sup> Parts have no independent reality.

The triadic method used by Hegel through which one reaches the Ultimate Reality or Truth is called the dialectical method which consists of thesis, anti-thesis and synthesis. The contradiction of the previous stage is resolved in the next stage. "In this sort of way, so it is contended, we can be driven on, by the mere force of logic, from any suggested predicate of the Absolute to the final conclusion of the dialectic, which is called the 'Absolute Idea'. Through out the whole process, there is an assumption that nothing can be really true unless it is about Reality as a whole."<sup>122</sup>

Each stage is a moment in the whole according to Hegel, "Each later stage of the dialectic contains all the earlier stages, as it were in solution; none of them is wholly superseded, but is given its proper place as a moment in the whole."<sup>123</sup> We can say that it is an evolution from the lower level to the higher level and the whole of the Reality is the Highest level which is purely spiritual in nature.

F.H. Bradley has made distinction between appearance and Reality and for him all finite things are appearances. "And hence for us anything which comes short compared with Reality, gets the name appearance. . . We mean its character is such that it becomes one, as soon as we judge it. Appearance consists in the looseness of content from existence, and because of this self-estrangement, every finite aspect is called appearance."<sup>124</sup> Reality cannot be interpreted in terms of secondary and primary qualities, substantive and adjective, relation

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121. *Ibid*, p.758.

122. *Ibid*, p.759.

123. *Ibid*, p.760.

124. Bradley, F.H., *Appearance and Reality*, p.430.

and quality, space and time, motion and change, causation and activity and the self to interpret the Reality in these terms is self contradictory. Reality is not self-contradictory, It is self-contained. "Anything less than the whole has turned out to be not self-contained. Its being involves in its very senses a relation to the outside, and it is thus inwardly infected by externality."<sup>125</sup> But the finite does not remain where it is. It moves towards the whole. It progresses, "everywhere the finite is self-transcendent, alienate from itself, and passing away from itself towards another existence."<sup>126</sup>

The Absolute is undivided. It is not the sum total of appearances. "It is the unity in which all things, coming together, are transmuted, in which they are changed all alike, though not changed equally. In this unity relations of isolation and hostility are affirmed and absorbed. These also are harmonious in the whole, though not of course harmonious as such, and while severally confined to their natures as separate."<sup>127</sup>

The individual self transcends the identity of the self and identifies with the Absolute. Bradley calls this process of increasing Reality or evolution the 'enlargement'. "A thing by enlargement becomes a mere factor in the whole next above it: and in the end; all provisions and all relative wholes cease to keep their characters."<sup>128</sup> In this process the lower transcends itself and enters into the higher.

Nature, for Bradley, is 'appearances' and spirit is Reality. In the end, the nature is absorbed into the Spirit. The Reality has been described as one. The oneness of Reality implies non-contradiction. There is no 'other'. 'Otherness' implies non-contradiction. All that exist is His extension. As one scholar has explained, "The word *ākār* means the visible expanse, or simply the expanse. Taking the three

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125. *Ibid*, p.430.

126. *Ibid*, p.430.

127. *Ibid*, p.432.

128. *Ibid*, p.438.



components of *Ik-Oamkār* together, then, we can say that it means the one universal being."<sup>129</sup> Only real and Spiritual can be without contradiction. It has been explained by Sohan Singh that, "In Indian Philosophy, each individual is a conjunct of *nām* and *rūp* i.e., Name and Form. But a Universal Being cannot be identified with any particular form and, hence, He is simply the Name (i.e. the spirit)."<sup>130</sup> He is the creator. Every thing manifest is His Creation. He had been described as *purukh* (person), the conscious Being, the controller, an Enjoyer of His Creation. The Reality is *nirbhau* also implying non-contradiction as its feature, "the word *bhau* has often been used by Guru Nanak to signify discipline. . . *nirbhau* therefore means the attribute of not being under an imposed discipline or restraint."<sup>131</sup> He is *nirvair* which means that He is harmonious, "Enmity in a Universal being is not enmity against another for there simply is no 'other' - it means internal antagonism, inconsistencies or contradictions. Nirvair, therefore, means the absence of these, that is to say, internal harmony."<sup>132</sup> He is *akāl*, which means that He is above time. So *akāl* implies that the limitations of time are not applicable to Him. Because according to Sikh view point, He is the creator of time. *Mūrat* means form, embodiment. It means that He is immanent in His creation. *Ajūnī* means that He is out of the cycle of birth and death. He is *Saibhan* self-existent. Self-existence also means that He does not need any other agency for His existence. *Satiguru prasād* means His uncontradicted knowledge which leads to attunement to Him which is achieved through the grace of the Guru. According to Sohan Singh, "A strict obedience to the wise and intuitive leading of a Guide is also normal and necessary for all but a few specially gifted seekers."<sup>133</sup>

That Reality is non-contradictory comes out clearly from the *Mūlmantra*. It is self-existent, self-identical and self-explanatory. It

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129. Sohan Singh, *op.cit.*, p.2.

130. *Ibid*, pp.2-3.

131. *Ibid*, pp.3-4.

132. *Ibid*, p.4.

133. *Ibid*, p.5.



does not imply any change or contradiction. "The train of thought in the *Mūlmantra* is clear—God, though Timeless, is yet embodied in finite forms existing in time and space, and though thus embodied, He is free from generation and cessation and does not require anyone else to bring Him into being as is the case with all 'bodies'."<sup>134</sup> The view of Reality given in *Mūlmantra* by Guru Nanak has been further explained by all the Gurus in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

In the concept of *qudrat*, we have seen that He created His *qudrat* Himself and *qudrat* will ultimately dissolve into Him. The whole of His creation is moving towards Him. He has created all this so that He can be realized by transcending the contradictions or errors which are inherent in finite creations. The relation between the Absolute and the parts has been described as that of sun with the rays, or the sea with the waves. According to the Gurus, ignorance and doubt are the reasons for feeling of 'otherness'. When these are removed man sees that there is only one Absolute being and He transcends the contradiction of otherness and gets absorbed into the Absolute.

Guru Gobind Singh observes in *Jap Sahib* that the Reality is non-contradictory. According to him, Reality has no distinguishing marks, no caste, no lineage, no form, no colour, no delineation and no one can explain it. He is unmovable, manifest being (*mūrati*), without restraint (*anbhau*) self-existent, of Infinite strength.<sup>135</sup> He is unfathomable one, unbounded and embodiment of bliss.<sup>136</sup>

We can say that according to Sikhism, the Absolute Reality is one without contradiction. It is one, existent being, truth, creator, without restraint, harmonious, above time generations and cessation,

134. *Ibid*, pp.4-5.

135. *Shabdarath Sri Dasam Granth* (Vol.I), *op.cit.*, *Jap Sahib*, p.1.  
chakar chihan aru baran jāti aru pāti nahan jih.  
rūp rang aru rekh bhekh koū kahī na sakat kih..

136. *Ibid*, *Jap Sahib*, p.6.  
agādhe abādhe, anandi sarūpe.



self-existent, self-identical, unalterable, etc. According to Shankara, the only non-contradictory knowledge is the knowledge related with that Reality because all else is illusion. According to Sikhism, the knowledge related with the Reality is the highest knowledge but other aspects of knowledge have not been rejected. The existence is not illusion. It is true because it has been created by God. But it is perishable and it is not true in the Absolute sense of the word. The Reality is purely spiritual. Like Hegel, Sikhism holds the view that creation embodies spirit and has meaning only in reference to the ultimate Reality pervading it. In Bradley's thought, the parts move towards the Reality to be transmuted in Reality. Similarly, in Sikhism, the manifest forms have the ultimate Reality as their destination. The appearances take birth from the Reality and in the end get absorbed into the Reality.

## Vivek (Bibek)

*Viveka* is a Sanskrit word. It has been variously translated as discrimination, distinction, consideration, discussion, investigation, true knowledge, discretion, right judgement, the faculty of distinguishing and classifying things according to their real properties, the power of separating the invisible Spirit from the visible world (or spirit from matter, truth from untruth, reality from mere semblance or illusion).<sup>137</sup> And '*Vivekijnāna*, is knowledge arising from discrimination, the faculty of discrimination.'<sup>138</sup>

*Viveka* has been considered as the highest knowledge in *Sāṃkhya* system of philosophy in Indian thought because it is the knowledge of the Reality, *purusa*, and *prakriti*. It has been observed that "in the absence of discriminating knowledge (*viveka*), human life is suffering (*dukha*), and/or ignorance (*avidyā* or *aviveka*). In the condition of non-discrimination, *purusa* appears as *buddhī* - and

137. M.M. Williams, *op.cit.*, p.987.

138. *Ibid*, p.988.



*ahamkāra* - i.e. as a part of the process of emergence which means endless transmigration and suffering."<sup>139</sup> Here *Viveka* has been termed as discriminating knowledge because it is through this knowledge that the discrimination between *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* is known. Through this knowledge, *puruṣa*, comes to know that he is different from *prakṛti*, that his essence is truth. This knowledge removes ignorance and illusion, the real nature of the *puruṣa* becomes clear and it leads to salvation. "When the realization arises, however, that *puruṣa* is different from *prakṛti* then the self is no longer subject to transmigration and suffering. In other words, when one realizes by means of discriminating knowledge that one's deepest nature or selfhood is *not determined* by the process of emergence, i.e., *prakṛti* and its modification - but rather is that which determines the process of emergence, then the possibility of freedom appears."<sup>140</sup> It is not an ordinary knowledge which provides the know-how of the ordinary life. It is a special kind of knowledge which leads to *kaivalya*. So it has been termed as 'salvation' knowledge. "Salvation knowledge is a special kind of 'knowledge' which brings one to the realization of the *puruṣa* itself apart from its appearing as what it is not. This salvation knowledge, which arises in the *bhāva*, *jñāna* of the *buddhī* represents a final discrimination that moves beyond ordinary knowledge."<sup>141</sup>

In Punjabi language, the form of Sanskrit word *vivek* is *bibek*. A Sikh scholar uses *bibek* as a kind of *budhī* and terms it as rational discrimination. It has been considered as a means to approach the universal Reality. According to him, "He (Guru) tried to combine rational discrimination—*Bibek Budhi*—with feeling—*Bhao*. With a strange combination of the two he tried to approach the universal Reality through aesthetic feeling for the beauty of nature in form, movement and sound."<sup>142</sup> At another place, the same scholar calls that state of intellect as *bibek* when it reaches the higher stage of faith and is able to discriminate between right and wrong. When intellect

139. Gerald J. Larson, *op.cit.*, p.13.

140. *Ibid*, p.13.

141. *Ibid*, p.201.

142. Sher Singh, *op.cit.*, p.223.



reaches the region of faith, it becomes purified and is named *Bibek Buddhi*. It can then discriminate between right and wrong path and can thus co-operate with the *anbhav*. In this co-operation the personality is on the right track and it is under the influence of Gurmat.<sup>143</sup> Though the scholar has talked about *bibek-buddhi* but has not analyzed the meaning of *bibek* as such. According to Avtar Singh, *bibek budhi* is the discriminating capability which enables the seeker to discriminate between the Reality and falsehood.<sup>144</sup>

From the above discussion, it seems that the Sikh scholars have dealt with *bibek* along with *buddhī* but not independently. To my mind, the *vivek* is the awareness of the revelation to the human mind. It is the highest knowledge, because it is the knowledge of the ultimate Reality. Dr Gopal Singh Dardi has translated '*bibek*' as wisdom, gnosis.<sup>145</sup>

Guru Nanak has referred to *bibek* in *Rāg Asā*. Here the occasion, when the Reality is revealed to the human mind, is termed as *vīāh*, marriage. When the Reality is revealed to the individual self, it signifies a marriage relationship of the self with the Absolute. In this situation, the sense-organs get in tune with the higher Reality. They are in harmony with the higher Truth. These have been termed by Guru Nanak as the friends of the bride, the human soul, assembled at that occasion. The bride asks her friends to sing the arrival of the bridegroom, the Absolute. The singing of the arrival of the bridegroom indicates the awareness of the revelation of the Reality to the mind which is conveyed through the sense organs to others also. *Bibek bichār* here is the knowledge of the Reality, of His presence about which the self becomes aware.<sup>146</sup>

143. *Ibid*, p.231.

144. Avtar Singh, *op.cit.*, p.90.

145. Gopal Singh Dardi, *op.cit.*, VolII, p.341.

146. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.351.

*gāvahu gāvahu kāmāni bibek bichāru.*

*hamrai ghari āiā jagjīvan bhatāru.*

While discussing the non-contradiction as feature of Reality, we have seen that the Reality is above fear and doubt. Now, when the seeker is united with the Reality, when Reality is revealed to him, he also rises above these two contradictions and is imbued with the feeling of universal love, when the light of God lits his mind the five-senses cannot bind him any more to the world, The man who has realized (*būjhai*), the Reality within, he has attained the highest knowledge (*bibek*) within.<sup>147</sup>

According to the Gurus only such persons attain the knowledge of Reality as are Guru oriented (*gurmukhs*). Such a person's heart is attuned with the praise of God. He is the purest of pure and the man of highest reflection.<sup>148</sup> Such a person emancipates others also. Such a seeker to whom the Reality has been revealed sees the one God everywhere. He sees none else.<sup>149</sup> According to Guru Amardas, man transcends the contradictions of appearance (*shakti*) and enters into the House of God (*Shiv*). He transcends his desires and attains the *bibek budhi* i.e., he is fully conscious of the revelation and through Guru (*purakhai*), he meets the Absolute *purakhu*.<sup>150</sup>

Guru Ramdas says that *bibek budhi* is the purest form of

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147. *Ibid*, M.1, p.355.

*būjhai brahamu antari bibaku.*

148. *Ibid*, M.3, p.317.

*gurmukh giānu bibek budhi hoi*

149. *Ibid*, M.3, p.947.

*sukhai chu bibeku hai antaru nirmalu hoi.*

*agiān ka bharamu katīai giānu prāpati hoi.*

150. *Ibid*, M.3, p.1276.

*acharu charai bibek budhi pāe purakhai purakhu milāi.*



consciousness of knowledge. The one who has attained this, drinks the essence of the union with God.<sup>151</sup> *Bibek* is that state of mind of the realized one in which the distinction between the revealed, the revealer and the consciousness of that revelation is removed.<sup>152</sup>

Bhai Gurdas holds that God has given the *bibek* to man, so that he can distinguish *vichār* and *avichār*, rational and irrational.<sup>153</sup> According to him, *gurmukh* is known as a *bibekī* because he has the discriminating knowledge.<sup>154</sup>

In the end, we can say that *bibek* is the consciousness of the union of the human with the Absolute. That person has *bibek* who apprehends the Reality which permeates in him. *Bibek* is not an ordinary knowledge. It is a distinctive kind of knowledge. This knowledge dawns only when man gets rid of *haumai*, ego. Only those persons can have it who are Guru-oriented. It comes with the grace of God. A person who attains *bibek* is emancipated and helps others in this direction. *Bibek* is the purest of pure knowledge according to the Sikh Gurus, because it is related with the Reality itself. When this is attained the self is absorbed into the Absolute.

So in one view the meaning of *Bibek* in Sikhism comes very close to the one in *Sāmkhya* system. *Bibek* is a kind of knowledge which helps us to discriminate the absolute Reality from the appearance.

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151. *Ibid*, M.4, p.1325.

Bibek budhi sabh jag mahi nirmal bichāri.....

152. *Ibid*, M.5, p.236.

karan karāvan sabhu kichhu ekai.

āpe budhi bichāri bibekai.

153. Bhai Gurdas, *op.cit.*, p.68.

pārbrahmu pūran brahamu brahmu bibeki dhīānu dharande.

154. *Ibid*, p.210.

gurmukhi budhi bibek bibeki jānīai.

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# **6**

## **UNITY OF REASON AND REVELATION IN SIKHISM**

**Understanding—Necessary and Universal**

**Knowledge—Validity of Knowledge**

**Rational and Irrational Belief—Possibilities of  
a Synthesis**



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## UNITY OF REASON AND REVELATION IN SIKHISM

We have discussed the nature and the role of the reason in Sikhism. We have also discussed the nature of revelation in Sikhism in the last chapter. Now we are to see, in the sixth chapter, the relationship between reason and revelation in Sikhism. As we will see in Sikhism, the nature of reason and revelation is such that they do not work at cross purposes. Reason helps the seeker to achieve his final goal, the revelation. He starts his *khoj* from the lower level and goes higher with the help of reason. But the ultimate truth is revealed to him only with the Grace of the Lord. In this chapter, first of all, we are going to discuss the concept of understanding for which in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* the word *sojhi* has been used.

### Understanding (Sojhi)

Before coming to Sikhism let us take the concept of 'understanding' as it has been dealt with by two eminent philosophers of the West, Kant and Hegel. To Kant, understanding (Ger. *verstand*) is, "the faculty of thinking, the object of sensuous intuition, or the faculty of concepts, judgements and principles. The understanding is the source of concepts, categories and principles by means of which the manifold of sense is brought into the unity of apperception."<sup>1</sup> Kant has propounded the general theory of understanding and he considers the root of understanding common with sensibility. As stated above,

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1. Dagobert D. Runes, *op.cit.*, 'understanding,' p.326.



what is perceived in the 'sensuous intuition' is thought about or unified in the faculty of understanding. That is why it is called the source of concepts, categories and principles. Kant has also made distinction between the sensibility and understanding. The faculty which receives the impressions of objects is entitled as sensibility and the faculty which turns them into unity and resultant knowledge is entitled as understanding. "If the receptivity of our mind, its power of receiving representations in so far as it is in any way affected, is to be entitled sensibility, then the mind's power of producing representations from itself, the spontaneity of knowledge, should be called the understanding."<sup>2</sup> According to Kant, human nature is so constituted that it is inherent in it that intuitive faculty is related with sensibility and thinking faculty is related with understanding. According to Kant, both the faculties are equally important for the sake of knowledge. None can be more required than the other, and both are also necessary in their respective fields. So one cannot be replaced by the other. Hence it is clear that according to Kant, knowledge is the united function of these two faculties. H.W. Cassirer, who has analyzed Kant's general theory of understanding remarks that, "We can never arrive at a proper understanding of perceptual knowledge, unless we are prepared to separate off two factors, that of sense-givenness and that of bringing the intellect to bear upon the given. In other words, there are two aspects of knowing, the aspects of having something given to one, and the aspect of making the given intelligible to oneself. They have no separate existence of their own. Yet if we refuse to acknowledge that, logically speaking, they are distinct from one another, we shall never succeed in grasping what perceptual knowledge is really like."<sup>3</sup>

Kant holds that sensible intuition is passive while understanding is active and spontaneous. According to Cassirer, "If it be asked why Kant assigns to the human intellect the characteristics of activity and spontaneity, the answer must be that it is, after all, we ourselves who

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2. Cassirer, H.W., *op.cit.*, p.52.

3. *Ibid*, p.53.



are responsible for the formation of general concepts. Conceptions are something which the mind produces actively, and it is precisely in this respect that they differ from perceptions. In so far, therefore, as we exercise our power of entertaining general ideas, We must be said to have gone entirely beyond the state of mere acceptance of the given."<sup>4</sup>

Kant calls the synthetic forms of the understanding as 'categories' or pure principles of the understanding by means of which percepts are synthesized into meaningful judgement of nature. These categories are concerned with the world of experience only not with the metaphysical world, the things beyond experience.

Another very important German idealist, Hegel, has not given 'categories' or principles of understanding like Kant. But for him also understanding is a formal deductive system. As pointed out by the scholar, "The kind of thought, characteristic of a formal deductive system is called by Hegel the thought of the understanding, a thought characterized by great fixity and definiteness of notions, presuppositions and deductive procedure, as well as by an extreme stress on the distinctness and independence of one notion of principles from another."<sup>5</sup> According to Hegel, understanding is necessary not only in the areas of sciences and arts. It does also play a very important role in cultivating the personality and ideas of a man. "Understanding is an essential element in cultivation. The cultivated man is not satisfied with anything nebulous and indefinite, but seizes on objects in their definiteness."<sup>6</sup>

It is held that, "For Hegel understanding is the *beginning* of philosophy; only when various mutually complementary, often antithetical abstractions have been clearly developed, will it be

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4. *Ibid*, p.55.

5. Findlay, J.N., *Hegel: A Re-examination* (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., third edition, 1970), p.60.

6. *Ibid*, p.61.



possible to integrate them into a richly, analysed living view.”<sup>7</sup>

So we have seen that both great Western philosophers have given much importance to ‘understanding’. According to them, understanding is the necessary part of knowledge because it is through understanding that the data which we receive through ‘sensible intuition’ or ‘perceptual consciousness’ is synthesized, unified.

We cannot say with certainty that such a scientific or logical exposition of understanding has been given in Sikhism. However, we do find a great stress laid on understanding. Understanding has been considered very much necessary to synthesize what the seeker perceives. Understanding in Sikhism is not mere synthesis of perceptions but the realization of the total Reality.<sup>8</sup>

According to Guru Nanak, the understanding of *tribhavan* comes to the mind who is awakened by *gurbānī*, *guru-śabad*. Only the seeker who hears the word, reflects on the word by the Guru’s grace knows that *gurbānī* leads to the highest state of life, the state of emancipation. A seeker who eradicates his ignorance, his ego and merges in the *śabad*, realizes the knowledge in its totality.<sup>9</sup>

This understanding is attained by the rare one who makes his mind wise through the Guru.<sup>10</sup> The Guru further holds that when

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7. *Ibid*, p.61.

8. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.60.  
giān padārathu paiai tribhavan sojhī hoi.

9. *Ibid*, M.1, p.844.  
ohu sabadi samāe āpu gavāe tribhavan sojhī sūjhai.

10. *Ibid*, M.1, p.62.  
virle kau sojhī paī gurmukhi manu samjhāi.

sense of ego or self is removed only then the understanding is attained and one is attuned through the *gur-śabad* to the Reality.<sup>11</sup> In *Rag Ramkālī*, *sidh-goshti* is a long discussion<sup>12</sup> between Guru Nanak and the *sidhās* where the Guru explains his views about real understanding.

According to Guru Amardas, the Name of the transcendent God is the treasure house of knowledge and such an understanding dawns on the mind of man spontaneously.<sup>13</sup> Understanding is necessary for training the human mind. The human mind, according to Guru Amardas, is just like an inebriated elephant and difficult to control. The Guru is *ankus*, goad who controls the mind and keeps it awakened to the Reality. The understanding of the nature of the human mind is attained when the man practises the deeds which lead him to the living of a *gurmukhi*, the Guru-oriented man.<sup>14</sup> It is not only the case, the understanding is also attained in the congregation of the holy, *satsangati*.<sup>15</sup> Further, the attainment of understanding of knowledge is through *gur-sevā*.<sup>16</sup> It is through the Guru's service that the seeker attains complete understanding.

According to Guru Arjan, everybody cannot see the Reality within. Only those can see it whom He Himself makes to see. Only such people can have the understanding of Reality.<sup>17</sup> We have seen

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11. *Ibid*, M.1, p.421.  
āpu gaia sojhī paī gur sabadi mela.
  12. *Ibid*, M.1, p.946.  
nāmai hī te sabhu pargatu hovai nāme sojhī pāi.
  13. *Ibid*, M.3, p.68.  
sahaje hī sojhī paī sachai sabadi apāri.
  14. *Ibid*, M.3, p.159.  
gurmukhi karnī kār kamāvai.  
ta isu man kī sojhī pāvai.
  15. *Ibid*, M.3, p.364.  
satsangati mili sabh sojhī pāe.
  16. *Ibid*, M.3, p.423.  
gursevā te tribhavan sojhī hoī.
  17. *Ibid*, M.5, p.293.  
tini dekhiā jinu āpi dikhāe.  
Nanak tisu jan sojhī pāe.



that in Sikhism, though the concept of understanding, has not been defined as clear cut deductive system like Hegel, not it is told like Kant that understanding is a faculty of ideas and concepts. Synthesis of three levels of knowledge is necessary and this is possible only through understanding in the above said sense. Through understanding mind rises above contradictions and limitations and the seeker attains emancipation. Understanding is through *śabad* which removes the sense of I-ness in man and helps him to cultivate his personality.

## **Necessary and Universal Knowledge:**

For Descartes the most necessary and universal knowledge is the knowledge related with the notion of God and from this notion of God he proceeds to what is created, to thought and extension, and from this to the particular.

According to Spinoza, the knowledge of the whole is most necessary and universal knowledge, to view everything as a part of the whole, the parts are not self subsistent. As Russell observes, "The existence of God is only an inference from eternal truths; for these must as the laws of nature have a universal sufficient reason which determines itself as none other than God. Eternal truth is therefore the consciousness of the universal and absolute in and for itself, and this universal and Absolute is God, who, as one with Himself, the monad of monads, is absolute monas."<sup>18</sup> So the universal and necessary knowledge, which is called by Hegel the Absolute knowledge, is as related with the Spirit. It is realized at the highest level of knowledge which is called by him scientific understanding.

## **Bradley**

According to Bradley, the necessary and universal knowledge is related with the reality as an harmonious whole. According to Bradley,

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18. Haldane, E.S., and others, op.cit., p.331.

“In rejecting the inconsistent as appearance, we are applying a positive knowledge of the ultimate nature of things. Ultimate reality is such that it does not contradict itself; here is an absolute criterion.” Reality excludes contradiction and is known to possess a positive character.

In Sikhism, the necessary and universal knowledge is related with the concept of *hukam*. The concept of *hukam* as such, we have already discussed in the fourth chapter (the kinds of knowledge and role of reason in Sikhism). There we have noted that in Sikhism, *hukam* has been taken in the sense of divine reason. It is the knowledge of causal relationship in nature. There is an orderliness in nature. In nature things are very cordially related. The knowledge of that relatedness, coherence is the necessary and universal knowledge. We may also call the *hukam* as the necessary reason of the things. We have also discussed there, the law of the uniformity of Nature in which we have seen that the sequences in phenomena do not happen in chaos. They have causal relations. The phenomenal manifestation is the expression of His *hukam*. According to Guru Nanak, the necessary and universal knowledge is related with *hukam*. To attain Him the seeker needs to attain the knowledge of His *hukam*. He says that whatever is, is by His *hukam*.<sup>19</sup> Nothing is outside its sway. So the one who knows *hukam*, his ignorance (*haumai*) is removed.<sup>20</sup> Guru Ramdas has also related *hukam* with *manni* or *manan* i.e., reflection. The reflection on *hukam* leads to bliss.<sup>21</sup>

So we have seen that the *hukam* is directly related with the universal and necessary knowledge. There is polarity between *hukam* and ignorance. To know *hukam* is to remove ignorance and falsehood. To understand *hukam* is to understand the coherent whole, the Reality.

19. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.1.

*hukamai andari sabhu ko bahari hukam na koi.*  
*Nanak hukamī je bujhai ta haumai kahai na koi.*

20. *Ibid*, M.1, p.109.

*hukamu pachhānai so hari gun vakhānai.*

21. *Ibid*, M.4, p.606.

*prabhu mani bhāvai ta hukami samāvai hukam mnani sukhu paia.*



According to Sikhism, the ideal for the seeker of truth is to realize *hukam*. *Hukam* is the sustainer of this universe. The universe is a coherent whole because of His *hukam* being operative in it. Through knowing the *hukam* the seeker knows the way of truthful living. So this knowledge is the ultimate knowledge. It leads to the attainment of the *hukamī*, God. Only the minds of those are illumined by this knowledge upon whom God bestows His grace.

We have seen that for Descartes the most necessary and universal knowledge is the knowledge related with the notion of God and from this notion of God he proceeds to what is created, to thought and extensions, and from this to the particular. From this knowledge the seeker attains the Reality and then His creation, how the creation is related with the manifestation of God. For Spinoza also, the only Reality is God and all other creation is His part. Man has the capacity to know this Reality. The only universal and necessary knowledge is the one which is related with this Reality. Leibnitz has also stressed the same view that everything has its cause in the universal God. For Hegel, the universal and necessary knowledge which is related with the realization of the Spirit has got the capacity to transform the self and realize its purity. It has been termed by him as the reappearance of the soul. For Bradley, in the knowledge of the Absolute all inconsistencies and contradictions are transcended. For him it is impossible for the finite being to realize the existence of the Absolute because to know, we should have to be and then we should not exist. Bradley has termed such knowledge as mystical insight or intuition.

## Validity of Knowledge

We have discussed the nature of the necessary and universal knowledge, according to the Western thinkers, especially the rationalists such as Descartes, Spinoza, Leibnitz and Hegel etc. and according to Sikhism. We have seen that the necessary and universal knowledge is that which is related with the Reality or the Spirit. It has also been explained that, according to Sikhism, the necessary and



universal knowledge is that which is related with the understanding of the *hukam* because it is through the understanding of the *hukam* that the Reality is revealed. Now we will see as to what are the grounds on which the knowledge is considered to be valid. In this context, we will discuss the views contained in the six Hindu schools of thought and the criteria adopted by the different Western systems of thought.

The self-validity of knowledge has been called in Hindu philosophy as doctrine of *svatah-prāmānya*. According to one scholar, "The doctrine of the self validity of knowledge (*svatah-prāmānya*) forms the cornerstone on which the whole structure of the *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy is based. Validity means the certitude of truth. The *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy asserts that all knowledge excepting the action of remembering (*smṛiti*) or memory is valid in itself, for it itself certifies its own truth, and neither depends on any other extraneous condition nor on any other knowledge for its validity."<sup>22</sup> So, we see that according to the *Mīmāṃsā* philosophy, self-evidence is the test of truth and except memory all *pramānas* are valid. Self-evidence or self-validity means that the validity is intrinsic, is inherent in knowledge itself. It does not depend for its validity on external means. Here *Mīmāṃsā* means the *purva-Mīmāṃsā*.

However, the *Nyāya* system of the philosophy does not accept this conception of self-validity of knowledge as given by *Mīmāṃsā*. According to *Nyāya* system, system of knowledge does not have self validity because, "If the production of any knowledge should certify its validity then there would be no invalidity, nor illusory knowledge, and following our perception of even a mirage we should never come to grief. But we are disappointed often in our perceptions, and this proves that when we practically follow the directions of our perceptions we are undecided as to its validity, which can only be ascertained by the correspondence of the perception with what we find later on in practical experience."<sup>23</sup> So according to *Nyāya* system, our

22. Surendernath Dasgupta, *A History of Indian Philosophy*, Vol.I, *op.cit.*, p.372.

23. *Ibid*, p.373.



knowledge can be valid only in reference to the objective realization of our desires i.e., when we proceed according to our knowledge it fulfills the practical purposes. For example, the perception of mirage cannot fulfil any practical purpose of water for drinking or bathing. So practical experience is the test of truth or validity of any given knowledge. As remarked by the above mentioned scholar, "The validity or truth of knowledge is thus the attainment by practical experience of the object and the fulfilment of all our purposes from it (*arthakriya-jñāna* or *phalajñāna*)."<sup>24</sup> But this theory given by *Nyāya* has been rejected on the grounds that it is just an hypothesis.

As far as Shankara's school of *Vedānta* is concerned, it admits all the six *pramānas* of Kumarila and like *Mīmāṃsā* it considers that all knowledge is self-valid. According to one scholar, the theory of self-validity of knowledge (*svataḥ-prāmānya-vāda*) maintained by *Vedānta* is a dual proposition which has two parts. "(i) that the validity of knowledge is intrinsic (*svataḥ-sidha*) and (ii) that the validity of knowledge is self-evident (*svataḥ-prakāśa*). The first part means that the validity of knowledge results from the totality of those very causes that produce knowledge (*pramā*). Whenever all the conditions necessary for the generation of a specific knowledge are fulfilled there must be that knowledge and it must be valid. Thus the validity of knowledge (*pramā*) is spontaneous and inherent in it. This is not imparted to it by anything other than the actual causes. With the origin of knowledge (*pramā*) from any of the six sources (perception, inference, verbal testimony, comparison, postulation and non-apprehension), that is free from deficiencies, its validity arises as a matter-of-course."<sup>25</sup> So the validity of knowledge, according to *Vedānta*, is intrinsic and its invalidity is extrinsic that it is caused by external factors. "When knowledge proves to be invalid, its invalidity is due not to the causal factors themselves, but to the presence of adventitious defects in them."<sup>26</sup> This is *svataḥ-sidha*, the self validity of

24. *Ibid*, p.373.

25. Swami Satprakashananda, *op.cit.*, p.112.

26. *Ibid*, p.112.



knowledge i.e., intrinsic. The second part of the theory is that the validity of knowledge is *svatah-prakāsa* that is self-evident. The meaning of self-evident is that, "With the apprehension of knowledge, its validity is spontaneously apprehended. Those very agencies that cause the apprehension of knowledge also cause the apprehension of its validity. Along with the manifestation of knowledge the witness-self, there is the manifestation of its validity. Any knowledge that arises in human mind is invariably apprehended as valid."<sup>27</sup>

In the Ramanuja school of *Vedānta*, the distinction has been made between valid and invalid knowledge and it is considered that the validity of knowledge is intrinsic i.e., knowledge is self-luminous. As observed by Surendernath Dasgupta, "In the Ramanuja school of *Vedānta*, *pramāna*, or valid knowledge, is defined as the cognition of objects as they are (*tathā-bhūtātatha jnanam-hi prāmanam ucyate*) and *apramāna* or invalid knowledge, is described as cognition representing a wrong notion of an object (*a-tathā-bhūtā-rtha-jñānam hi apramānam*)."<sup>28</sup>

Now after discussing the validity of knowledge in Hindu schools of thought, we come to the Western thought, where also different tests of truth or criteria of valid knowledge have been applied by the different schools of thought.

The Western philosophers have tried to settle the question not about the nature of truth but about the test or criterion which makes for the truth-claim of knowledge. They have also concerned themselves in the question whether the factors which determine the validity of knowledge or truth are extraneous or identical with or integral part of it. In the Western philosophy, there are different schools of thought in this regard. The test of criterion of truth in some cases is hardly separable from the nature of truth itself, whereas some others have distinguished these two. For example, in Pragmatic and

27. *Ibid*, p.113.

28. Surendernath Dasgupta, *op.cit.*, (Vol.III), p.247.



Correspondence theory of truth the test or criterion is the connative satisfaction in the first case and an extraneous condition in the second one. The test and criterion of truth, according to another theory, is either coincidence with the nature of truth or is an integral part of it. We have already discussed these theories in the fourth chapter.

## Pragmatic Test of Truth

According to pragmatic test of truth, "ideas or judgements have nothing in themselves of a truth-claim but something must be added on to them by way of connative satisfaction to convert them into truth." James, a pragmatist, himself admits that "ideas and judgements are not valid in themselves but they are validated by the satisfaction of purpose of the agent that follows upon them. Truth happens to ideas and judgements and not ideas and judgements have any claim to truth by themselves."<sup>29</sup>

According to the correspondence test of truth, "There must be some sort of correspondence between ideas and facts. Truth requires for its very being a form of perceptual experience in which we must be aware of a form of correspondence as its minimum condition. But this correspondence cannot be one between ideas and facts which have no community or mutual determination between them. . . Ideas are, at least in the case of knowledge of an adult mind, already determined by facts, and facts are facts for ideas and they are already determined by ideas. Now this mutual determination of ideas and facts in any knowledge situation is only incipient or implicit but becomes articulate in a judgement in which truth-claim appears. Correspondence or contact between ideas and facts does not occur as a subsequent result and therefore as a criterion added extraneously to the situation of truth to vindicate its claim."<sup>30</sup> So it may be said that correspondence is a condition necessary for truth but it is not itself truth.

29. Bhattacharya, H.M., *The Principles of Philosophy*, (Calcutta, Calcutta University, May 1948, second edition), p.163.

30. *Ibid*, p.164.

## The Coherence Test of Truth

This is the objective idealist theory according to which truth is coherence amongst our experience of systems or experience. As stated by a scholar, "Facts and law, elements and system, mutually imply and support one another. If a law is comprehensive enough to cover all the relevant facts, and explain them consistently with one another, we regard it as true. This two-edged test of comprehensiveness and consistency is called the test of coherence."<sup>31</sup>

## The Validity of Knowledge according to Sikhism

According to the Guru, *gīan* is used for the valid knowledge. The invalid knowledge cannot be regarded as knowledge. They appear to support the view that the validity of knowledge, is self-evident to the real knower. This self-validity is spontaneously apprehended by the knower. The third Guru, Amardas, avers that the seeker in whose mind is truth spreads the truth further. This truth is self-evident. The *gīanī* (the knower) knows this truth spontaneously.<sup>32</sup>

The Gurus have accepted the existence of a higher luminous source of True knowledge. This luminosity of knowledge is also the basis of its validity. It is the very nature of luminous knowledge to reveal itself, its knower and its validity in the course of revealing the object. All these become manifest simultaneously. In this respect the Gurus appear to be closer to the Vedic systems in articulating the view of the self-validity of knowledge.

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11. Robert Latta and Alexander Macbeath, *The Elements of Logic*, (London, Macmillan and Co. Ltd., 1964), p.373.
  2. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.3, p.232.  
sāchu na chhapāi je ko rakhai chhapāe.  
gīanī būjhai sahaji subhāe.



Guru Nanak has called knowledge the collyrium which dispels all fears and the knower sees the pure one (*niranjan*) by loving Him. So, for Guru Nanak the knowledge is valid for the very reason of God being its source. According to Guru Nanak, knowledge is valid because it is self-evident. The Guru has further described the self-validity and self-evidence of knowledge by giving beautiful similes. According to him, when the lamp is lit the darkness remains no more. So when one reads the *Vedas* (*Vedas* are considered the source of knowledge) one's mind must be purged of sin. As when the sun rises, the moon does not shine, when the knowledge dawns there must not be any ignorance.<sup>33</sup> The Gurus here used the word *agīan* for invalid knowledge which is opposite of valid knowledge.

According to Guru Arjan, the knowledge is self-luminous and when it is manifested in the human mind that state ever remains, it goes not. This is the highest luminous source of true knowledge through which man is imbued in the love of God and ever remains in the company of the transcendent Lord. And then, as water mingles with the water, in the same way the light in the knower merges in the light of God. Here the knowledge, the knower and the known become one.<sup>34</sup>

So we have seen that according to the Gurus, the knowledge is self-valid and its self-validity is intrinsic. The basis of the self-validity of knowledge is its self-luminosity. The self-validity of knowledge is spontaneously apprehended by the knower. As mentioned earlier, it is nearer to the theory of self-validity of knowledge, according to the Vedic schools. But the Vedic schools have made a distinction between the valid knowledge and invalid knowledge. The Gurus have used the word '*agīan*' in opposition to '*gīan*'. It seems that according to them which is invalid cannot be regarded as knowledge. So it is termed as

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33. *Ibid*, M.1, p.791.

jah gīan pargāsu agīanu mitanu.

34. *Ibid*, M.5, p.277.

antari hoi gīan pargāsu, us asthān ka nahī bināsu.



'*agīān*' and '*bharam*'. And which is '*gīān*' is self-valid and self-evident. This view is nearer to the coherent criterion of truth in the Western philosophy and the intrinsic and self evident nature of the criteria of knowledge according to Shankara.

## Rational and Irrational Belief

We have just discussed the validity of knowledge and the different criteria of Truth according to the various thinkers and schools of thought. We have also discussed the criteria of the validity of knowledge according to Sikhism. Now we take up for discussion the rational and irrational belief according to Sikhism. We have seen in the section dealing with the validity of knowledge that according to the Gurus, knowledge is self-evident to the real knower. This self-validity is spontaneously apprehended by the knower. Such a knower is called *gīāni* or the possessor of valid knowledge in Sikhism. Such a person or seeker is also called *gurmukh* in Sikhism. The one who does not possess the valid knowledge is considered as *gīān-vihūnā* or *agīāni*, *mūrakh* or *manmukh*.

Rational knowledge is the awareness of forms and relations. It is the awareness of logical relations, i.e., the awareness of the relation of cause and effect. It is rational to infer the effect from the cause but it is irrational to look for an effect without sufficient and proper cause.

First of all let us know as to what we mean by cause. By cause we mean a set of certain necessary conditions which necessarily produce certain effect under given circumstances. We may call it a necessary relation between the event and the conditions which produce it. The cause may mean an unopposed tendency to produce an event i.e., every cause would be followed by its effect at all times. In Indian philosophy, especially *Nyāya* system of logic, "finds nothing in the cause other than unconditional invariable complements of operative conditions (*kāraṇa-sāmagrī*) and nothing in the effect other than the consequent phenomenon which results from the joint operations of the



antecedent conditions. Certain general conditions such as relative space (*dik*), time (*kāla*) the will of *Isvara*, destiny (*adrsta*) are regarded as the common cause of all effects (*kāryatva-prayojaka*). Those are called *sādhārana kāraṇa*.<sup>35</sup> According to Surendernath Dasgupta's observation, the causal relation according to the *nyaya* system of thought, is "like the relation of genus to species, is a natural relation of concomitance, which can be ascertained only by the uniform and uninterrupted experience of agreement in presence and agreement in absence, and not by a deduction from a certain *a-priori* principle like that of causality or identity of essence."<sup>36</sup> In *Nyāya* system of logic, the cause has been further divided into many kinds i.e., *samavāyi* or intimate cause and *asamvāyi* cause, *nimitta* (instrumental) cause and *sahākārī* (accessory) cause, etc. etc. We need not go into their detail.

In the Western logic the cause has been defined as relations between the totality of conditions and the phenomenon which in their combination they produce. There is a certain relation between the cause and effect. An event having a cause must have the same cause on every time when it occurs. It is held that, "the cause of an event is the totality of relevant conditions required to produce it, and the effect is the totality of relevant consequences which follow when the cause is operative. So regarded, the relation between cause and effect is reciprocal. Given the cause the effect must follow, and it never follows unless the cause is there."<sup>37</sup>

The Gurus are rationalist in their outlook while believing in the method of proving propositions by appealing to abstract and universal principles such as the relation between cause and effect. According to them, the cause certainly leads to its effect or consequences. For example, according to them it is rational to hold that as one sows so one reaps. According to them, it is irrational to look for an effect

35. Surendernath Dasgupta, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, p.322.

36. *Ibid*, p.322.

37. Robert Latta and Alexander Macbath, *op.cit.*, p.291.

without sufficient and proper cause.

According to Guru Nanak, whatever one sows so shall he reap. A person eats only that what he has earned.<sup>38</sup> Guru Nanak further holds that the *Vedas* proclaim that the seed of heaven and hell is in virtue and sin. But valid knowledge makes us praise the True God whose *nām* is also truth. So in this way, the truth fructifies in man and he finds a place in the court of God.<sup>39</sup>

According to Guru Amardas, the *manmukh* or self-willed person discards the jewel as if a straw because being self-willed they are blind and are attached to duality. They never get peace even in their dreams because they reap only what they sow.<sup>40</sup>

Guru Ramdas holds that those who have deceit within and wash themselves from without they are practising falsehood. But their falsehood becomes manifest because whatever one has within becomes manifest and one cannot hide it even with efforts. Such a person lured by greed comes into birth time and again. Because one has to reap what one sows. This is the law of the Creator.<sup>41</sup>

Guru Arjan calls this body a field of actions where one reaps only what one sows. Those who are ungrateful to God they forsake

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38. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.730.  
jaise bījai so lune jo khate so khāi.

39. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1243.  
jo bījai so ugavai khāndā jānai jīu.

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sachu bījai sachu ugavai dargah pāiai thāu.  
40. *Ibid*, M.3, p.113.  
joi bījai soī phalu pāe, supanai sukhu na pāvanā.

41. *Ibid*, M.4, p.1243.  
Nanak jo bījai so khāvanā kartai likhi pāia.



Him due to which they wander from one birth to another.<sup>42</sup>

As we have referred to earlier, an irrational belief is that because of which one looks for an effect without sufficient and proper cause. Guru Nanak has indicated in beautiful words that those who sowed the whole seed reaped honour, and now if the broken seed is sown how shall it sprout. For the seed to sprout there are certain conditions which must be fulfilled. According to the Guru, first the seed should be in whole (not broken one), then the season must be favourable. Only then the seed will sprout.<sup>43</sup> The Guru further holds that it is irrational to sow something else and to wish the fruit of an opposite nature. For example, a man sows poison and wishes to reap nectar, it is not justified. It is irrational. Similarly, whatever a man has in his mind becomes manifest. But if he has one thing in mind and speaks another, then whatever he says is useless, irrational.<sup>44</sup>

This view of Guru Nanak has been supported by Baba Farid. According to him, it is irrational on the part of the peasant who having planted *kikar* (a thorny tree) and expects to pluck grapes from that tree. It is not possible. Similarly one who spends his life in spinning wool and expects wearing silk because of it does so without any justification.<sup>45</sup>

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42. *Ibid*, M.5, p.706.

jaisa bijai so lunai karam ihu khetu.

43. *Ibid*, M.1, p.468.

biu biji pati lai gae ab kiu ugavai dāli.

je iku hoi ta ugavai ruti hu ruti hoi.

44. *Ibid*, M.1, p.474.

jo ji hoi su ugavai muh kā kahia vāu.

bije bikhu mangai amritu vekhahu ehu nīau.

45. *Ibid*, Baba Farid, p.1379.

Farīda lorhai dākh bijauriā kikari bijai jatu.

handhai un kataīda paidhā lorhai patu.

Bhai Gurdas has further elaborated this idea given by the Guru. According to Bhai Gurdas, it is irrational to seek for an effect without a proper cause. How is it possible, he says, for a man to sow poison and expect nectar as its fruit. Similarly, he poses the question that is it possible for a woman who marries a dead body to live a married life.<sup>46</sup> We have already discussed that cause includes, according to *Nyāya* system, unconditional invariable complements of operative conditions (*kārṇa-samagrī*) and effect includes the consequent phenomena which results from the joint operations of the antecedent conditions. So, if operative conditions are not fulfilled then it is irrational to seek the desired result i.e. the effect. And according to Bhai Gurdas, an irrational person (*mūrakh*) sows the seed in the wrong season. So that seed will not sprout.<sup>47</sup> As the proper season is needed to sow a particular seed similarly proper kind of soil is also needed. When the seed is sown in a particular season and in a proper soil, it sprouts. But when it is sown in a barren land it does not sprout and it is irrational to expect the coming of spring.<sup>48</sup>

So we have seen that the Gurus are rationalists in their outlook. They have rejected irrational beliefs.

## Possibilities of a Synthesis

We have discussed the concepts of reason and revelation in the third and fifth chapters. We do not agree with antinomy between reason and revelation in Sikhism. *Bānī* is not irrational. Knowledge given by *bānī* is rational. Guru Nanak emphasizes the need to use reason in the understanding of revelation. An irrational person may wrongly interpret superstitious state of consciousness as revelation.

46. *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, op.cit., p.365.  
mirtak nālī viāhīai sohāgu na thīai.  
visu haḷāhal bīji kai kiu amiu lahīai.

47. *Ibid*, p.426.  
mūrakh bījai bīu karutai.

48. *Ibid*, p.326.  
khetī jnmai sahans gun kalar khetī na bīj angūrai.



Guru Nanak has clearly forewarned the seeker to be vigilant against accepting the irrational beliefs as revelation of the divine. The Gurus do not rule out the possibility of the revelation being beyond the comprehension of the person who has not prepared himself for it through a continuous effort for self-realization. It seems that only a self who has cleansed his mind of the false notions and risen higher than the socially transmuted or individually conditioned superstitious beliefs can be discriminating enough to understand the true import of the revelation. The Gurus suggest a possibility of a meaningful synthesis between reason and revelation at the higher level of comprehension.

Guru Nanak asks to use reason (*vichār*) to comprehend the revelation and then create devotion in his mind for the true revelation (*bānī*). Only then one can attain the ideal of his life which is emancipation.<sup>49</sup> Reason is necessary to distinguish between true revelation and false one. The use of word *sāchī* indicates so. Guru Nanak further holds that through *śabad* man becomes a hero through the four cycles of time. He conquers his inner desires and dedicated to the *śabad* he reflects on *bānī*. So, through reason he becomes able to understand *bānī*.<sup>50</sup> According to the Guru, the truth is manifested through revelation in the minds of those Guru-oriented seekers only who reflect on the *śabad* and such people are very rare.<sup>51</sup> The Guru is of the opinion that a seeker who dwells upon *śabad* through reason he

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49. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, M.1, p.661.

bhanati nanaku kare vichāru.

sachī bānī siu dhare piāru.

50. *Ibid*, M.1, p.908.

sabadi sūr jug chāre audhū bānī bhagati vichāri.

51. *Ibid*, M.1, p.946.

gurmukhi sāchu sabadu bīchārai koi.

gurmukhi sachu bānī pargatu hoi.

becomes satiated by the revelation (*bānī*).<sup>52</sup>

According to Guru Nanak, a seeker who reflects on the *śabad* of the Guru as revealed in the *bānī* comes to know that God resides in the soul and the soul resides in God. Only such a seeker realizes the revelation (*bānī*) in him through the *śabad*. His ignorance (*haumai*) and the sorrows which arise due to that ignorance are removed.<sup>53</sup>

According to the third Guru, Amardas, the seeker has been advised to reflect only on the *śabad* of the Guru. Only through this true revelation its melody is realized.<sup>54</sup> He further holds that *bānī* (revelation) is the only Guru which is to be followed and reflected upon.<sup>55</sup>

According to Guru Arjan, the word (*bachan*) of God is indescribable but is the mainstay of the saints. This truth can be realized only by reflecting on the *bānī* (revelation) of the Gurus.<sup>56</sup>

In the explanation given above, we have seen that reason and revelation are not contradictory to each other according to Sikhism. It is through reason that man becomes able to understand the revelation. It is through reason that man differentiates between the true revelation and the false one. Man is to shed his contradictions and superstitions through reason. Only then he is able to attain the highest truth and understand revelation. Reason comes first. Through reason man becomes able to move higher and to understand the essence of revelation. So, in Sikhism reason and revelation go together and the

52. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1109.

*sāchī bānī santokhiā sachā sabadu vīchārā.*

53. *Ibid*, M.1, p.1153.

*anmrit bānī sabadi pachhānī dukh kātai hau mārā.*

54. *Ibid*, M.3, p.564.

*sāchī bānī sachu dhuni sachu sabadu vīchārā.*

55. *Ibid*, M.3, p.646.

*ika bānī iku guru iko sabadu vīchārī.*

56. *Ibid*, M.5, p.80.

*tere bachan anūp apār santan ādhār bānī bichārīai jū.*



possibility of their synthesis has been accepted. We have already discussed that *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* is the religious scripture of the Sikhs which contains the revelation made by the Gurus. The fifth Guru, Arjan, Dev has very beautifully expressed the importance of the Holy *Granth* in the epilogue given at its end. This epilogue describes the importance of rational reflection to understand the revelation contained in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*. The Guru says that three things are placed in the platter. They are truth, contentment and rational reflection. That person attains these things who imbibes the *Nām* of God in his mind. *Nām* being the support of all. The seeker who tastes it, who relishes it is fulfilled. The Guru proclaims that the one who understands and assimilates the essence of this revelation shall be saved and no one can do without this. The Guru has ordained that this *bānī*, revelation is to be kept in mind with devotion. Through this man swims across the dark sea of existence and understands that all that seems is the expanse of God.<sup>57</sup>

So reason has got very important place in Sikhism along with the reverential place of revelation. Reason co-exists with revelation because it is the medium for the rational being to understand what has been conveyed to him by the highest Reality through revelation. According to *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, knowledge and right orientation fashion the conduct of a man. It is said in the last stanza of *Japuji* that chastity is the smithy and the patience is the goldsmith. Rationality of the mind is the anvil and knowledge is the hammer (knowledge means highest knowledge, *ved*) which beats the gold of life into shape. The bellows are the discipline and the fire is the austerities. In the pot of love and devotion, in it the nectar is melt. In this true mint is coined the *sabad*. But only those on whom is His grace conduct themselves in this way. Only those attain Bliss upon whom the gracious God bestows

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57. *Ibid*, M.5, p.1429.

thā vichī tīni vasatū paṁo satu santokhu vīchāro.

His favour.<sup>58</sup> So discernment and rational understanding is necessary along with *ved* (divine knowledge). *Ved* does not mean an ordinary knowledge. It means the divine knowledge (*ishvari jnāna*). So reason and revelation are synthesized in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.

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58. *Ibid*, M.1, p.8.  
jat pahārā dhīraju suniāru.  
aharani mati vedu hathiāru.



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## **CONCLUSION**



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## CONCLUSION

Philosophy of religion is an interesting application of the speculative and analytical effort to the understanding and exposition of the truths received or perceived in mystical or 'religious' manner. Most of the religious traditions grounded in India appear to be centred in or around 'enlightening' event of one or the other kind. Even the traditions of Buddhism and Jainism accept the 'illumination' as the apprehension of the higher knowledge. Although the receivers of truth differ in their articulation of the pantheistic, transcendent or the panentheistic character of the truth, yet they mostly seem to accept that hearing, seeing or a sudden apprehension of the higher or more general truth, is a 'special' event. For some it comes only at the end of sustained and intensive deliberation. There are others who are convinced that the rational thought and the deliberation are elements and aids to enable the perceiver to apprehend the 'revealed' truth. The notions of supra-rational insights or knowledge is also very often encountered by us in our study of the religious traditions of man.

We have, in the present research undertaken a detailed study of the idea of reason and revelation in the relatively speaking, more recent religious tradition of India. The concepts of reason and revelation in Sikhism constitute a significant contribution to the study of world religions. But these have not so far received the proper attention of the scholars specializing in the field. No systematic and analytical study of these concepts is available. Some of the scholars, however, have casually referred to these two concepts in Sikhism in their works. All these works have been taken into consideration in the



course of the present study. The present research is based mainly on the primary sources of Sikh religion viz. *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* and *Sri Dasam Granth*, the basic Sikh scriptures. The works of Bhai Gurdas, considered a key to the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, especially his ballads (*vārān*) are very important secondary sources. The *Janam-Sākhīs* (biographical sketches) and other relevant literature have also been kept in view while analyzing the concepts of reason and revelation.

Sikhism appears to have richly gained from the religious heritage of India. The Gurus—the founders of Sikhism—have used nearly all the words used in the earlier traditions for explaining the special character of the ‘received’ knowledge. Neither the earlier seers decried the role and place of reason in human knowledge, nor such a view appears to be held in Sikhism as is evident from our study. The Gurus do not appear to have directly addressed themselves to the problem of determining the nature of reason alone. They seem to be engaged in the task of communicating the higher Truth whose revelatory nature is expressed through the use of the word *bānī*. The *bānī*, however, does not eliminate or down grade the role of reason in religious or spiritual life. We may briefly recapitulate the main contention of the thesis and conclude the present study with some general observations.

The uniqueness of reason in Sikhism consists in its being used not to refute the views of the opponents and to establish its own superiority but in helping the seeker to attain the knowledge of the higher Reality, the revelation. It does not only help to understand revelation but also to prepare and enable the seeker to receive that knowledge. The function of reason is to help the seeker in his endeavour for the realization of the highest Truth. The uniqueness of revelation in Sikh religion is that the highest Truth has been revealed not through a son of God, or through *Avītaras*, or through Divine Statements to a Prophet once for all, it has been a continual process from the first Guru, Nanak Dev, to the last and the tenth Guru, Gobind



Singh. They speak the Truth as God has ordained them to speak "*hāu āpahu boli na janadā mai kahīā sabhu hukmāu jīō*." They were simply the carriers of that message of God, to the people, "*hao dhādī vekār kare lāiā*." And *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, the Sikh scripture, the Holy Book contains this unique revelation. So the *Granth* has got a very unique position in the scriptures of the world religions. The revelation (*bānī*) has been recorded by the Gurus themselves. It has been accorded the status of Guru for the spiritual guidance of the Sikhs after them. No other scripture has been accorded such a status.

The uniqueness of reason and revelation in any religious tradition consists in the type of ideals and aims, it places before man to seek and the type of personality which is the consummation of the religious endeavour. The aim of reason and revelation in Sikhism is self-realization (*man tū joti sarūp hai apanā mul pachhānu*). The personality of the realized one is shaped after the object of his worship. God is the highest Truth and the seeker can become truthful (*sachīār*) only after realizing God (*jaisā sevai taiso hoi*). The means for the attainment of this goal is to understand the *hukam* which may be called the Divine Reason, prevalent in the whole universe and then to live according to *hukam*.

In the second chapter, the concepts of reason and revelation in the traditions earlier to Sikhism, such as Hinduism, Christianity and Islam have been analyzed. In Hinduism the aim of human life is to get release from the bondage of the world, the attainment of *moksha*. To fulfil this aim, one needs the knowledge of the *Brahman* or the realization of the Ultimate Reality. To attain this knowledge, three possible ways have been described which are sense-perception, reason and verbal testimony. Under verbal testimony comes the *Vedas* and the *Upaniśads* which have been termed as *Śruti*. The knowledge contained in them is considered as revealed one. The *Veda-Samhita* is not related with the philosophy, it is related with the rituals. In the *Upaniśads*, which are considered the philosophical part of the *Vedas*, the distinction has been made between the lower knowledge and the



higher knowledge. It is held that the knowledge related with the *Brahman* is not possible to attain only through human reason unaided by revelation. There is perfect fusion of reasoning and intuitive understanding. The need of the spiritual teacher has also been stressed for the realization of the Supreme Self. For the attainment of the goal, stress has been laid on the three-fold path of *sravana*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. The *Gītā* is the *Yoga* of the realization of the Supreme Self, to be nearer to Him, to be Him. For this purpose, the *Yoga* of the *Karma mārga*, *Bhakti mārga* and *Jñāna mārga* has been stressed. Reason plays a great role in this path of three-fold *Yoga*. The idea of revelation in the *Gītā* is four-fold: God resides in His creation, when He Incarnates Himself in the form of human being, when the seeker ascends to God in the mystical experience, and when the Divine Knowledge is conveyed to the world in the form of language. The six systems of Hindu philosophy have accepted six means of valid knowledge which are called *Pramānas*. It is held that there is no contradiction between all these *Pramānas* because they operate in the different areas of knowledge. The point which is common in all these Hindu systems is that knowledge has been considered to be an important means for the realization of the Self, reason being of great use in achieving this knowledge. But the Ultimate Knowledge is the spiritual knowledge which is contained in the *Śruti*. So the role of reason is to help to understand the *Śruti*. The *Vedas* and the *Upaniśads* have been considered as the ultimate authority by all the six systems of Hindu philosophy. Reason is used to understand, to support and to establish the superiority and authority of the revealed knowledge contained in the *Vedas* and the *Upaniśads*. But according to Hindu tradition the way to the Vedic knowledge is not open for every body. Only the twice-born people, the high *Varanas* have the right to reach the higher knowledge.

According to Christianity, the knowledge gained through reason is brightened by the divine knowledge. They are not contrary to each other. However, divine knowledge transcends reason. The Christian faith is founded on the *Bible* and for this reason every Christian



doctrine has to be in tune with the scripture. According to Christian scholars, revelation takes place in nature, in mystical experience and through special disclosures of God, as a son, to man. He is the Divine son, born of a virgin, by the divine act of the Holy Ghost. God combined in Him both the human and divine elements. Reason has been used very widely in Christianity, from time to time, not only to interpret the scriptures, to defend faith and to construct theology but also as an independent source of knowledge.

In Islam there is a special school of rationalists called the *mutazilites*. Reason has been used to interpret the sayings of the *Qūrān*. It has been considered a means to understand the revelation and has been the source of many movements within the fold of Islam. The *Qūrān* is the embodiment of the word of God which was revealed to prophet Muhammad in the cave through the angel Gabriel, and he was commanded by God to 'read' this message to others. The idea of revelation both general and special is found in the *Qūrān*.

Comparative study of the concepts of reason and revelation in these three traditions has been very helpful to us in understanding the philosophy of religion in general and in the analysis of the Sikh view of reason and revelation in particular.

In the third chapter, the nature of reason in Sikhism has been analyzed. The Sikh Gurus gave a very important place to reason in the secular as well as spiritual life of man. They have encouraged that type of reasoning which results in constructive thought and leads to the seeking of knowledge. The seeker of True knowledge has been termed as the *khojī* and given a high status (*khojī upjai bādī binsai*). The other words which have been used for reason or reasoning in *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* are *Soch*, *Vīchār*, *Aql* and *Sīanap*. They convey reason in their general sense but they have been studied in this context in their special sense. *Soch* is specially related with the thinking faculty of man. It is concerned with the understanding of the truth described by the Guru. *Vīchār* is related with *manan* which has been discussed in



the fourth chapter. *Vichār* is logical discussion. It is held by Gurus that to realize the essence of his self, the seeker needs *Vichār* or logical discussion on the *śabad*. Another word used for reason is *Aql* which has its origin in Arabic language. It is held that it should not be wasted in futile discussion. It is through *Aql* that man realizes what he reads and listens, "*aqlī sāhib sevīai*." Through *Aql* man serves God. The distinction between the *bādī* and the *khojī* is the first stage of reason, the second stage is that of *Soch*, *Vichār* and *Aql*, when man reflects upon the *śabad* and uses his mental faculties to understand what he reads and listens from the Guru. The higher stage of reason is that of *sīānap*. *Sīānap*, when used at the higher level means a deeper insight and the person who has such deeper insight is termed as *sīānā*. On the whole, the function of reason on theoretical level is to discover truth, to make the seeker understand the *Nām* which is the manifestation of God, and the ultimate Truth. On practical level its function is to guide his conduct, to take away him from the irrational beliefs and superstitions and make him rational. Only such a person can comprehend the knowledge related with the ultimate Truth, *Akāl-Purakh*. Its function is to lead the person to the level of *Chetan Parkāsh*.

In the fourth chapter, the kinds of knowledge and role of reason in Sikhism have been discussed. This chapter has been divided into two parts: In the first part the concept like *gīān*, *surīai*, *mannai*, and *dhyān* have been discussed and in the second part the concepts like *hukam*, uniformity of nature, *śabad* and *sach* have been taken for study. In Sikhism, three kinds of knowledge have been accepted viz., perceptual, rational and intuitive knowledge. This has been very clearly described by Guru Nanak in *Japuji*. These are rather the three stages or levels of knowledge. The one has not been rejected for the sake of the other. First kind of knowledge leads to the second kind and is succeeded by the third kind of knowledge. They are inter-related and inter-dependent. The whole purpose of *gīān* in Sikhism is to provide the seeker a clear vision of everything. And reason, according to Sikhism, plays a great role in it. Like *Upaniśads*, in Hinduism the



three-fold path of *suniai*, *mannai* and *āhyān* has been described in Sikhism. Great stress has been laid on *mannai* which is related with *vīchār* or reflection. A man of reflection has been held in high esteem "*manne kī gati kahī na jāe.*"

In the second part, the concept of *hukam*, which has its origin in Arabic language, has been taken. The *hukam* here is equated with the concept of '*nous*' in Plotinus' philosophy and the concept of *Rta* in the *Vedas*. It may be termed as divine reason. The understanding of *hukam* leads to the understanding of nature as a uniform whole in which everything is happening under the *hukam* of God, according to set rules. Then it leads to knowledge of Reality, the *śabad*. *Śabad* is the verbal testimony related with the spiritual knowledge and the medium through which the Reality is known. *Śabad* leads to *sach* which has three aspects. Firstly, it is the definitive nature of God. Secondly, it is an ethical virtue which is to be lived. Thirdly, it is a guiding principle for the seeker. *Sach* is not only to be known, it is to be lived. *Sach* is above everything but above *sach* is *sach-āchār*, truthful living. So man is to express his knowledge of Truth in his actions. It arouses in man the *nirmal bhao* and he views everything as the expression of one Ultimate Being, the creation of *sati* out of *sati*. In this way, with the help of reason the seeker rises from the lower level to the higher level of consciousness. He becomes able to understand revelation as conveyed by the Gurus.

In the fifth chapter, the nature of revelation in Sikhism has been analyzed. The special revelation in Sikhism is in the form of *bānī*. The *bānī* is the primal word of God according to the Gurus, *ih akharu tinī ākhū jini jagatu sabhu upāiā*. The idea of *avtarvāda*, God taking birth as a human being, has been rejected in Sikhism. The *avtāras* are the creations of God like all other creation. Their worship as God has not been approved in Sikhism. God is above generation and cessation. The Guru in Sikhism is a carrier of God's word. His messenger. The position of the Guru is somewhat like the position of prophet Muhammad in Islam who is considered as only the carrier of the



message of God. The Gurus do not claim prophethood for themselves. According to Sikhism, God manifests Himself in His *qudrat* through his *hukam*. The idea of general revelation, or His manifestation is related with *qudrat* and *hukam*. The *qudrat* has been termed as true and the abode of true God. He is immanent in His *qudrat* as well as transcendent from it. His *hukam* is operative everywhere, nothing is outside His *hukam*. According to Sikhism, the Reality is one Universal Being, the Real, the Spirit, Creator, without restraint and enmity, above cessation and generation. Timeless, the Embodied to whom the seeker attunes through Guru's grace. So the Reality is above contradictions. The whole creation is moving towards Him and in the end merges in Him.

The sixth chapter deals with the unity of reason and revelation. For this purpose, the concepts of *sojhī* (understanding), necessary and universal knowledge, validity of knowledge, rational and irrational belief, have been deliberated. In Sikhism, the understanding of the *hukam* which is prevalent everywhere is considered very important. The necessary and universal knowledge, according to Sikhism, is related with *hukam* because it is the knowledge of the *hukam* which leads to the knowledge of the *hukamī*. The *gīan*, according to Sikhism, as in *Vedānta* also, is self-valid and self-luminous. It is self-valid because, according to Sikhism only that knowledge can be termed as *gīan* which is self-valid. For invalid knowledge the term *agīan* has been used. It has not been considered knowledge. *Gīan* is self-luminous also. When it is attained the knower, the knowledge and the known, all three become one. The possessor of such knowledge is termed as *gīanī* or *braham-gīanī*.

The Sikh Gurus are clear and emphatic in their rejection of the irrational and the superstitious belief. These are seen as a bondage from which the enlightened person must seek to obtain release. This effort would relate the man with the higher order of being. Somewhere here the revelation will complete the task set by the self before itself. The Sikh Gurus see the hand of grace in this revelation. The purpose

of the revelation is to help man to apprehend higher order principles underlying the lower order or the less general principles. The revelation enables man to perceive the coherence of the cosmos in which he finds himself. The revelation is, therefore, not something opposed to the human effort towards knowledge, it is its zenith. However, the teaching is, as in the case of most of the similar sacred literature, not set in the background of cold ratiocination, but in the warmth of the human heart which may sustain man in his effort to reach beyond himself to apprehend the truth. There is much in the sacred literature which is not directly related to a rational communication. But then man is not merely rational. The sacred revelation has to satisfy the whole of his being and, therefore, appears to present itself as a coherent whole inclusive of the rational as well as the *emotive* and the *connative*. This is, perhaps, the conclusion to which my humble study leads.



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# INDEX OF THE CONCEPTS

## A

abhaipad 130  
absolute 194  
achāryā 48  
agman 6, 8  
amrit 153  
anumana 49, 53  
anupalabdhi 59  
aparā vidyā 5  
apaurishya 34  
āpta 50, 51  
āptavaçana 53  
aql 104-6  
arthapatti 59  
ātamsākashatkār 5  
avtāra 13, 14, 45, 46, 63, 66  
avtaravād 177-184, 242

## B

bādī (vādī) 83-88, 92  
bani 169-66  
being 145  
belief 220-24  
bhakti 66, 174  
bharam 13, 35, 38, 39, 41, 45, 220  
bhekh 7  
brahman 35, 37, 39, 41, 45, 47, 60, 62, 63, 64, 174  
brahmagyani 15, 16  
budhi 53, 56

## C

cognition 155  
coherence 160-1

## D

deduction 6, 56, 84  
dharma 57, 60, 64  
dhyān 62, 139-43

## E

epistemology - 6  
experience - 3, 5, 8, 50, 59, 62, 64

## F

faith 71, 72

## G

giān mārāg 152  
god 7, 13-15, 17, 34, 48, 51, 55, 62-71, 79, 108, 110, 145, 147, 149, 163, 173, 175, 177, 181, 185, 188, 208  
grace 14, 71, 122, 139, 169  
gurmukh 15, 16, 101, 109, 220  
guru 7, 16, 17, 18

## H

haumai 99, 100, 162  
hearing 97  
hukam 120, 141-47, 183

## I

illumination 231  
incarnation 172-179  
inductive 6  
inference 9, 10, 51, 55, 56, 58, 60  
initiation 40  
intuition 4, 5, 10, 19, 56, 65, 66, 77, 124, 129, 206, 214



**K**

kalam 77

khands 8, 9

khoji 83-93

knowledge 3-9, 34, 35, 38-41, 47-49,  
52-56, 60, 61, 67-69, 73, 76, 85-  
87, 90, 92, 94, 96, 97, 101-4, 120-  
30, 136, 138, 165, 191, 213-22,  
234

**L**

liberation 55

logos 72, 142, 150, 151

**M**

man 13, 14, 17

manana 62, 63, 96, 97

manifestation 179-86

manmukh 222

mat 144

meditation 13, 14, 64, 70

moksha 35, 47

**N**

nām 16, 145

nature 147-49, 195

nigman 6, 8

nirbhau 195

nirvair 195

nirvikalpaka 57

non-contradiction 191-97

non-dualism 23

**P**

panch 138

panentheism 187-90

parma 52

perception 49, 51, 60

pramana 49-55, 57, 59, 64, 129

pravidya 4, 5

pratyaksha 53, 57

prophet 179, 180

proposition 155

puruṣa 183, 184

**Q**

qudrat 148-49, 183

**R**

rational 3-5, 7, 9, 12, 61, 77, 90

reality 4, 5, 16, 35, 44, 60, 62, 64,  
158, 163, 164, 190, 191, 193,  
196,

reason 3-9, 17-19, 33, 39, 44, 46, 48,  
53, 54, 59, 61, 62, 66, 67, 76, 79,  
83, 95, 103, 105, 108, 134, 160,  
227

rehat 10

renunciation 6

revelation 3, 4, 6, 10, 11, 13, 16-19,  
33, 44-46, 56, 60-67, 71, 72, 76,  
107, 163-70

- christian 70, 175

- islam 74, 78, 79

**S**

śabad 15-17, 50, 51, 58, 90, 95, 98,  
99, 149-53, 225, 233

sach 153, 234

sachiār 10

sahajdhian 132

salvation 135

savikalpaka 57

sanyās 6

śravana 62, 98, 130

self 52, 57, 59, 62

sensibility 3

siānap 105, 106, 109

smādhī 54

smriti 60, 61

soch 94, 95, 111

sojhi 205-213

soul 20, 38

spirit holy 73

spiritualism 22

śruti 37, 42, 43, 47, 48, 60, 61, 192

suniai 130-33

superstition 111, 112

surat 95

syllogism 75

synthesis 224-27

swanubhuti 5

## T

tarka 48, 63, 90

testimony 4, 51, 52, 56, 62, 65

theology 75

triadic method 173

truth 5, 6, 14, 16, 36, 38, 110, 128,  
133, 138, 140, 144, 153-92, 199,  
217, 218, 232

## U

understanding 205-9

upmāna (comparison) 49, 59

## V

vīchār 96-101

vidyā 52

vivek 197-201

## Y

yoga 234

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